ECONOMICS
OF
KHADI

BY

M. K. GANDHI

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FOREWORD

The appalling poverty of India and the rapidity with which it has increased during the period of British rule on account of the deliberate destruction of our handicrafts created a deep impression on Mahatma Gandhi even in his early days. He has been on the look-out for ways and means for relieving it. As early as 1908 he spoke of " the ancient and sacred hand-looms " in his *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, and advised lawyers and doctors to take up the wheel and wealthy men to devote their money to its encouragement. In his search for a remedy he conceived the idea of true Swadeshi which was already being preached but without any precision or deep thought about its implications. He has defined Swadeshi as " that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote ". It is necessary to attend to the primary physical needs of man and satisfy them by the use only of things that are produced by himself or his immediate neighbours. The primary needs are food, clothing and shelter. We have not lost altogether the art of providing and producing our own food, although we are steadily losing that also. We used not only to be self-sufficient in the matter of clothing but were able also to produce a large quantity for sale and export to other countries. A house cannot be imported from elsewhere and man has to build himself one, but the materials of which it is made may not be Swadeshi in the above sense. The greatest inroad on true Swadeshi has been made in the matter of our clothing, and it was therefore natural that this aspect should have come first of all under Gandhiji's observation and spurred him on to a study of the causes of the ruin of what was at one time not only the means of supply of a primary need

but also a means of attracting wealth from elsewhere, besides being a fine art which extorted the admiration of people of all countries with which we had commerce from the earliest times of which any historical record is available.

In 1908, indeed until much later, Gandhiji was not acquainted with the art or craft of spinners nor had he seen a spinning wheel. He thought that encouragement of the hand-loom industry, even though it could weave the yarn spun in and supplied by machine-driven mills, would solve the problem of supplying Indian-made cloth. He soon discovered that Indian mills were also acutated by the same motive of profit as foreign mill-owners, that the mills would increase the price of yarn if the hand-loom cloth began to compete with their mill cloth, and that they would ultimately cease to supply yarn to hand-looms either on account of the development of the mill weaving industry side by side with spinning or for avoiding competition. He therefore began to think of finding out the means of producing the yarn also. The rediscovery of the charkha or the spinning wheel was the result of the search.

Spinning on the charkha had never really ceased to be practised in India. Only Gandhiji did not know the charkha, and the story of its discovery reads like a romance in his *Autobiography* where three chapters are devoted to it. He discovered it after much labour. Having discovered it he started investigation and research about its potentialities and for improving its capacity for producing more and better yarn, so as to make it an economically profitable occupation. This research has gone on during the last twentyfive years without a break and has already achieved some remarkable results.

The spinning wheel and its product khadi did not receive recognition until they were adopted by the Indian National Congress. In 1921 by its Bezwada

resolution the A. I. C. C. demanded not only the collection of one crore of rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund but also the introduction of twenty lakhs of spinning wheels to enable a successful boycott of foreign cloth to be effected. The spinning wheel became a symbol of freedom and found a place in the centre of the national flag. Those were days of tremendous activity. More than a crore was collected by the 30th June, 1921, and thereafter thousands of Congress workers, spread all over India, devoted their attention to the spinning wheel, and it was found that there were thousands of spinning wheels working in different corners of the country but in a disorganized and moribund condition. Even as they were, they had not ceased to produce the beautiful kokti of Bihar or the fine fabric of Andhradesh. Congress workers began to vie with one another in their enthusiastic support of the charkha. National schools and Vidyapiths which were opened in 1921 made spinning an important and compulsory item in their curricula. Many ashrams too were started which made spinning and the manufacture of the charkha and its parts a speciality. The Congress Committees devoted a large amount out of the Tilak Swaraj Fund to the revival and encouragement of hand-spinning and hand-weaving. Gandhiji's Satyagrahashram at Sabarmati became a research institute for it. Immense enthusiasm was evinced, but at the time it was largely uninstructed. It does not connote disparagement of anyone to say that the technique of spinning was not known to most of the Congress workers who enthusiastically carried its message to the remotest villages. Gandhiji realized this weakness at the earliest stage and insisted that Congress workers should become spinning experts, that national schools should become spinning schools, and that all ashrams should become centres for spreading spinning and khadi. Much impetus was given to the use of khadi. With the vast

Congress organization which had grown up in that year, with large sums of money devoted to it, with a large number of workers employed in its spread, and above all with Gandhiji's incessant tours throughout the country and constant preaching of its utility and efficacy in bringing about a successful boycott of foreign cloth, culminating in Gandhiji's giving up shirt and cap and resolve to wear only loin cloth and chaddar in October 1921, khadi and the charkha became a most important item in the Congress programme for attaining Swaraj. While it offered opportunities for strengthening communal unity — particularly Hindu Muslim unity — and for helping the removal of untouchability, as large numbers of spinners and weavers in various parts of the country were Mussalmans and Harijans, the movement, in turn, received support in its onward march from these items in the national programme.

I have stated above that Provincial Congress Committees organized khadi work on an extensive scale. It became necessary to produce khadi and to make it available to all who wanted it, and the work was taken in hand with much enthusiasm. If the success of the Swaraj movement could be appraised by counting the coins which had been subscribed towards the Tilak Swaraj Fund, it could be visibly demonstrated also by pointing out the number of men and women who were wearing khadi and by counting the number of spinning wheels that were plying. The Ahmedabad Congress gave one such demonstration by using only khadi for all its cloth requirements and holding an exhibition in which khadi and the processes of making it played a most important part. Such exhibitions have now become a most attractive feature of the Congress annual sessions. By the time Gandhiji was imprisoned early in 1922 sufficient progress had been made to require supervision and control of the activity. At the Gaya Congress in

December 1922 the exhibition organized a demonstration of processes of khadi-making from the stage of the collection and cleaning of the raw material right up to the marketing of the finished goods. Khadi was not confined to hand-spun and hand-woven cotton cloth. Silk and woollen cloth was also included, and in fact coarser fibres like jute from which carpets and the like are produced were also exhibited and their processes demonstrated by experts brought from various parts of the country. All this gave a fillip to the khadi movement which at once made it a countrywide movement with immense potentialities. The work had spread to such an extent that it was felt at the Coconada Congress in December 1923 that an All India Khaddar Board should be formed "with full power to organize and carry on khaddar work throughout India under the general supervision of the All India Congress Committee and to raise funds including loans therefor in addition to the allotments that may be made from the general funds."

The following year was spent largely in pioneer work and investigating and examining facilities available for khadi work in the country and its immense possibilities. That an enormous number of charkhas were working was also discovered. The Board reported at the end of the year that under its auspices khadi of the value of Rs. 949,348 was produced. Besides this there was a large quantity of khadi produced and sold by private agencies. It was calculated that hand-spun yarn of the value of Rs. 2 crores was being produced and consumed in the country. Khaddar bhandars for the sale of khadi and centres for producing it were established. Voluntary spinning was encouraged and bureaus opened for supplying information and publishing literature connected with the technique and spread of khadi. More than 8 lacs was invested as capital in the work in that year.

The A. I. C. C., by a resolution passed at its Patna session on 22nd September 1925, established the All India Spinners' Association as an expert organization for the development of hand-spinning and khaddar unaffected and uncontrolled by politics, political changes or political bodies but as an integral part of the Congress. It was to have independent existence and powers. Since then this body has carried on the work and has collected funds for the purpose with the help of Mahatma Gandhi. This Association was later registered as an Association under the Charitable Societies Act (XXI of 1860).

Not only has the quantity of khadi produced and sold gone on increasing from year to year, but its quality has improved beyond recognition and an ever increasing body of workers who are experts has remained engaged in improving the instruments used and the technique of production and marketing. A glance at the following figures for the three quinquenniums from 1926 to 1940 will show the progress in this respect:

Quinquennium	Production in rupees	Sale in rupees
1926-30	1,53,72,883	2,00,59,517
1931-35	2,07,38,757	2,76,95,553
1936-40	2,20,59,673	2,76,44,467

The current year bids fair to be a record year both in the matter of production and sale. The extent of good that the movement has done may be visualized to some extent, if we see that the amount of wages paid to artisans engaged in the production of khadi from 1925 to 1940 amounts to Rs. 35,941,900. The movement has naturally had ups and downs and there were also losses in the earlier years, but it has now reached a stage when it may be said to be established on a sound business footing. It is essentially a charitable work, but it is charity that blesseth both him that gives and him that receives. It does not distribute alms — it gives employment and pays for the work done.

The work is of a nature which can be done even by those who are disabled from doing other kind of work on account of their physical limitations. The A. I. S. A. thus does not encourage idleness and laziness. On the contrary it acts as an incentive to employ our idle hours in a useful and benefecial manner.

The A. I. S. A. has not confined its activity to mere production and sale of khadi — important as that work has been. The Association could not by itself hope to supply all the cloth that would be required to replace mill-made or even foreign cloth. It encouraged private individuals and organizations to produce and sell khadi — certifying the genuineness of the stuff that they were placing in the market. It was necessary to do so, as much cloth which was made wholly or partly out of yarn spun in mills — Indian or foreign — used to pass for hand-spun and hand-woven khadi, and it was discovered that some mills started even manufacturing cloth which looked like khadi and passed it off as khadi. Genuine khadi has never attempted to compete with mills so far as prices are concerned. This furnished a great temptation in the way of dealers, and manufacturers who could make much profit by selling mill-made cloth or cloth made partially or wholly of mill-spun yarn as khadi. The system of certification assured genuine khadi to those who were willing to pay higher prices for it.

In the earlier years of the movement the effort of all production centres used to be to get khadi produced at as low a cost as possible, and the Branches tried to sell it at the cheapest possible price. This naturally resulted in paying low wages to the spinner and the weaver. Being otherwise unemployed these workers willingly accepted any wage however low. With wages low enough, particularly of spinners, some varieties of khadi were able even to compete with mill-made cloth of the lower counts. But as this was possible

only as a result of exploitation of the poverty of the spinner, Mahatma Gandhi came to the conclusion that khadi could not in this way remove the poverty which it was intended to remove. He therefore suggested to the A. I. S. A. that the spinner, who was the lowest paid, should be paid a living wage for the work done. The goal he placed before the Association was that no artisan, whether a spinner or a weaver, should be paid less than 8 annas for good, honest, efficient 8 hours' work a day. The average earning of the spinner at that time was hardly an anna a day. Paying 8 annas where 1 anna was being paid for the yarn would have raised the price of khadi to the extent of making it unsalable. It was, therefore, found impossible to increase the wages to 8 annas at one jump. But it was decided to raise them to 2½ to 3 annas a day and to study the effect of this increase on the production and sale of khadi.

It required very detailed and elaborate calculation and experiment to fix the wages. Spinners spin in their own homes. All do not possess equal skill, nor have they the same speed in spinning, nor do all possess instruments which are equally efficient. They do not all work for the same number of hours as is done in a factory. Decentralization produced practical problems which had to be solved before a rule could be evolved that would ensure 2½ annas or 3 annas a day for 8 hours' efficient work. Yarn is ordinarily purchased by weight. The price of cotton, which varies, has to be separated from the wages of spinning in fixing a rate that would ensure the living wage. Many experts, among whom the name of Shri Vinoba Bhave may be specially mentioned, made experiments by spinning eight hours a day themselves. An average was found and a calculation arrived at by which wages for spinning different qualities of yarn were fixed so that a spinner could earn the living wage. The earning would of course be less, if the stipulated time

was not given to it or if the spinner had less than the average skill or speed or the tools were less efficient than was contemplated. Many workers had grave misgivings about the result of the experiment. They feared that the sales would go down enormously, and that khadi, which was not able to compete with mill cloth even when it paid low wages to spinners, would not be salable if the price was still further raised, as it was bound to be if the wages of spinning were doubled or trebled. But Gandhiji was insistent, and the A. I. S. A. decided to increase the wages. This happened in 1935. It was of course anticipated that sales would go down, but it was also hoped that with higher wages assured it would be possible to insist on improved quality of the yarn, and that efforts could be made to improve the instruments and the skill and speed of the spinner. All this would demand more efficient workers — efficient both in spinning and as organizers.

There was one great defect which was noticed by anyone who visited a production centre. The spinners and weavers who produced khadi for sale did not themselves wear khadi. The reason was that the low wages which they earned could not enable them to purchase khadi which was dearer than mill cloth, and their other needs were so great that they could not afford to spin or weave for their own use. When the wages were raised one of the conditions insisted upon was that only those spinners and weavers should be employed who would wear khadi. As the wages had been increased many of the spinners readily agreed, and a system was introduced whereby a small part of the wages was deducted and kept in deposit and accumulated until it was sufficient to pay the price of a piece of cloth which the spinner could use. In this way, while higher wages were made available to the spinners, they also became customers or consumers of the cloth they were producing.

The figures for the last two quinquenniums quoted above do not show much difference. The reason is to be found in this increase in the wages and consequent rise in the price of khadi. The experiment is based on a very far-reaching principle, viz. the principle of a living wage for all workers, which has a bearing on all other industries and on the wages paid in other undertakings.

The anticipated fall in the sales on account of rise in prices as also the hoped for improvement in the quality of khadi and larger consumption of it by those engaged in producing it were realized in the years that followed. Thus the fall in production and sale of khadi by the Branches of the A. I. S. A. and certified individuals and organizations was marked as between 1934 when minimum wages were not fixed and 1936 when such wages were in operation for the whole year. The following figures show the position:

Year	Total Production		Total Sale
	In Rupees	In Sq. yards	In Rupees
1934	33,98,380	95,56,788	46,59,125
1936	27,74,029	64,88,926	36,73,690
1940	51,36,983	95,51,438	77,62,750

The fall from 1934 to 1936 in production and sale, if considered in terms of rupees, was nearly in the same proportion, viz. to 79 and 78 per cent respectively. But the fall in terms of yardage was larger, viz. to 67 per cent. The reason for this discrepancy is that khadi was dearer in 1936 on account of the higher wages, and for the same amount of money a smaller quantity was produced or sold in 1936 as compared with 1934. But if we take the figures for 1940, we find that we have reached back the yardage of 1934 and far exceeded the figures in rupees of both production and sale. The temporary setback in sale and production on account of the rise in wages has thus been more than made up.

The progress in other respects has, however, been phenomenal. The wages paid to spinners have increased from Rs. 680,011 in 1934 to Rs. 2,090,378 in 1940. The spinners and weavers have largely taken to wearing khadi themselves, and thus the anomaly that was noticeable before has been removed. The increase of sales to producers is remarkable as will appear from the following figures which are, however, not always complete.

Spinners

Year	Total number	Khadi wearers	Percentage of khadi wearers to total	Wages paid in rupees	Khadi purchased in rupees
1936	1,03,383	9,781	9.3	7,23,461	1,37,631
1940	2,54,958	60,553	23.7	14,40,583	3,47,436

Weavers

Year	Total number of weavers employed	Khadi wearers	Percentage of khadi wearers to total
1936	10,106	3,400	33.6
1940	14,477	9,448	65.2

There has been one development which is worth noticing here. On account of a rise in wages of spinning, the supervision of certified producers has become very difficult. The temptation to pay lower wages than those fixed by the A. I. S. A. has been too great for many of them, and the A. I. S. A. has had to cancel the certificates of many, and production through certified agencies has perforce considerably gone down. Another problem which has not yet been solved is the problem connected with the sale of uncertified khadi — i. e. khadi produced with lower wages than those fixed by the A. I. S. A. There is a considerable quantity of this kind of khadi being sold. It sells readily because it is cheaper and because many,

even amongst Congressmen, have not appreciated the principle of a living wage and are satisfied if they can get hand-spun khaddar, no matter whether the spinner has been sweated in the process and paid what may be justly called an exploitation wage. If khadi has to prosper and spread, if the principle underlying it has to be maintained, Congressmen and women who carry the message of khadi to others will have to give up the temptation of purchasing cheaper uncertified khadi. If they cannot afford to purchase genuine khadi, they cannot do better than meet their needs by spinning enough for their own use and thus do away altogether with the necessity of purchasing it.

This brings me to another very important aspect of the khadi movement, namely the programme of self-sufficiency. As Gandhiji has written: "The mission of khadi is not merely to supply the townspeople with fashionable khadi that will vie with the mill manufactures and thus, like other industries, supply a few artisans with employment, but it is to become a supplementary industry to agriculture. In order that it may fulfil this mission it has to be self-sustained and its use must spread in the villages. Just as the villagers cook their own roti or rice, so must they make their own khadi for personal use. The surplus, if any, they may sell." Efforts have been made from time to time to make a selected area or group of persons self-sufficient in the matter of meeting their cloth requirements. The work is difficult and yet incredibly simple, if only our age-old inertia is removed. "A person who has a little land which he can call his own even for a fair period and works on it daily can have his khadi for the mere labour put in by him or his family during their odd moments. All he needs is instruction or education to show how each one can make his own khadi practically for nothing." An ever-increasing band of men and women are thus becoming self-sufficient. The rise in wages of spinning and

consequent increase in the price of khadi do not affect them. The various Branches of the Association are encouraging the ideal by providing instructors where they are needed as also facilities for weaving of yarn spun for personal use and by exchanging yarn for cloth. It is evident that the ultimate success of khadi must be found in this scheme of self-sufficiency which has to be pursued with vigour and determination.

Khadi, however, has not been conceived only in terms of elimination of foreign cloth or mill-made cloth. It symbolizes the self-sufficiency of our villages in other respects also. It is the sun round which all the other village industries revolve. We can win Swaraj through the spinning wheel. " Khadi means the truest Swadeshi spirit, our identification with the starving millions." " The revival (of the charkha) cannot take place without an army of selfless Indians of intelligence and patriotism working with a single mind in the villages to spread the message of the charkha and bring a ray of hope and light into their lustreless eyes. This is a mighty effort at co-operation and adult education of the correct type. It brings about a silent and sure revolution like the silent but sure and life-giving revolution of the charkha. The charkha must lead us to Swaraj in terms of the masses belonging to all faiths. The charkha restores the villages to their rightful place and abolishes distinction between high and low. But the charkha cannot bring Swaraj, in fact it will not move, unless the nation has faith in non-violence. " It is this innate connection between the charkha and non-violence and between non-violence and the true Swaraj of Gandhiji's conception that has to be seen. Nothing can bring home the truth better than the words of Gandhiji who has conceived the idea, built up a philosophy round it, and, what is even more valuable, tried to live it.

In the following pages the reader will find discussed in detail not only the economics of khadi but also a history of the movement as it has developed from its early days when its conception took shape in Gandhiji's mind. He will read an interesting account of countrywide tours which Gandhiji has undertaken in this behalf, as also of the experiments that have been made, the difficulties that have had to be encountered, and the success that has been achieved.

22nd December, 1941 RAJENDRA PRASAD

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ECONOMICS OF KHADI

I

SWADESHI

[An address delivered before the Missionary Conference, Madras, on 14th February 1916]

It was not without great diffidence that I undertook to speak to you at all. And I was hard put to it in the selection of my subject. I have chosen a very delicate and difficult subject. It is delicate because of the peculiar views I hold upon Swadeshi, and it is difficult because I have not that command of language which is necessary for giving adequate expression to my thoughts. I know that I may rely upon your indulgence for the many shortcomings you will no doubt find in my address, the more so when I tell you that there is nothing in what I am about to say that I am not either already practising or am not preparing to practise to the best of my ability. It encourages me to observe that last month you devoted a week to prayer in the place of an address. I have earnestly prayed that what I am about to say may bear fruit, and I know that you will bless my word with a similar prayer.

After much thinking I have arrived at a definition of Swadeshi that perhaps best illustrates my meaning. Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion. That is the use of my immediate religious surrounding. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects. In the domain of politics I should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of eco-

nomics I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting. It is suggested that such Swadeshi, if reduced to practice, will lead to the millenium, because we do not expect quite to reach it within our times. So may we not abandon Swadeshi even though it may not be fully attained for generations to come.

Let us briefly examine the three branches of Swadeshi as sketched above. Hinduism has become a conservative religion and, therefore, a mighty force because of the Swadeshi spirit underlying it. It is most tolerant because it is non-proselytizing, and it is as capable of expansion today as it has been found to be in the past. It has succeeded not in driving out, as I think it has been erroneously held, but in absorbing Buddhism. By reason of the Swadeshi spirit a Hindu refuses to change his religion, not necessarily because he considers it to be the best, but because he knows that he can complement it by introducing reforms. And what I have said about Hinduism is, I suppose, true of the other great faiths of the world; only it is held that it is specially so in the case of Hinduism. But here comes the point I am labouring to reach. If there is any substance in what I have said, will not the great missionary bodies of India, to whom she owes a deep debt of gratitude for what they have done and are doing, do still better and serve the spirit of Christianity better by dropping the goal of proselytizing while continuing their philanthropic work? I hope you will not consider this to be an impertinence on my part. I make the suggestion in all sincerity and with due humility. Moreover I have some claim upon your attention. I have endeavoured to study the Bible. I consider it as part of my scriptures. The spirit of the Sermon on the Mount competes almost on equal

terms with the Bhagavadgita for the domination of my heart. I yield to no Christian in the strength of devotion with which I sing 'Lead kindly Light' and several other inspired hymns of a similar nature. I have come under the influence of noted Christian missionaries belonging to different denominations. And I enjoy to this day the privilege of friendship with some of them. You will perhaps, therefore, allow that I have offered the above suggestion not as a biased Hindu, but as a humble and impartial student of religion with great leanings towards Christianity. May it not be that the message 'Go ye unto all the world' has been somewhat narrowly interpreted and the spirit of it missed? It will not be denied — I speak from experience — that many of the conversions are only so-called. In some cases the appeal has gone not to the heart but to the stomach. And in every case a conversion leaves a sore behind it which, I venture to think, is avoidable. Quoting again from experience, a new birth, a change of heart is perfectly possible in every one of the great faiths. I know I am now treading upon thin ice. But I do not apologize, in closing this part of my subject, for saying that the frightful outrage that is just going on in Europe perhaps shows that the message of Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Peace, has been little understood in Europe, and that light upon it may have to be thrown from the East.

I have sought your help in religious matters which it is yours to give in a special sense. But I make bold to seek it even in political matters. I do not believe that religion has nothing to do with politics. The latter divorced from religion is like a corpse only fit to be buried. As a matter of fact, in your own silent manner you influence politics not a little. And I feel that, if the attempt to separate politics from religion had not been made as it is even now made, they would not have degenerated as they often appear to

have done. No one considers that the political life of the country is in a happy state. Following out the Swadeshi spirit, I observe, the indigenous institutions and the village panchayats hold me. India is really a republican country, and it is because it is that that it has survived every shock hitherto delivered. Princes and potentates, whether they were Indian born or foreigners, have hardly touched the vast masses except for collecting revenue. The latter in their turn seem to have rendered unto Caesar what was Caesar's and for the rest have done much as they have liked. The vast organization of caste answered not only to the religious wants of the community but it answered to its political needs. The villagers managed their internal affairs through the caste system, and through it they dealt with any oppression from the ruling power or powers. It is not possible to deny of a nation that was capable of producing from the caste system its wonderful power of organization. One had but to attend the great Kumbha Mela at Hardwar last year to know how skilful that organization must have been which, without any seeming effort, was able effectively to cater for more than a million pilgrims. Yet it is the fashion to say that we lack organizing ability. This is true, I fear, to a certain extent, of those who have been nurtured in the new traditions. We have laboured under a terrible handicap owing to an almost fatal departure from the Swadeshi spirit. We, the educated classes, have received our education through a foreign tongue. We have therefore not reacted upon the masses. We want to represent the masses, but we fail. They recognize us not much more than they recognize the English officers. Their hearts are an open book to neither. Their aspirations are not ours. Hence there is a break. And you witness not in reality failure to organize but want of correspondence between the representatives and the represented. If during the last fifty years we had been educated

through the vernaculars, our elders and our servants and our neighbours would have partaken of our knowledge; the discoveries of a Bose or a Ray would have been household treasures as are the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. As it is, so far as the masses are concerned, those great discoveries might as well have been made by foreigners. Had instruction in all the branches of learning been given through the vernaculars, I make bold to say that they would have been enriched wonderfully. The question of village sanitation, etc., would have been solved long ago. The village panchayats would be now a living force in a special way, and India would almost be enjoying self-government suited to its requirements, and would have been spared the humiliating spectacle of organized assassination on its sacred soil. It is not too late to mend. And you can help, if you will, as no other body or bodies can.

And now for the last division of Swadeshi. Much of the deep poverty of the masses is due to the ruinous departure from Swadeshi in the economic and industrial life. If not an article of commerce had been brought from outside India, she would be today a land flowing with milk and honey. But that was not to be. We were greedy, and so was England. The connection between England and India was based clearly upon an error. But she does not remain in India in error. It is her declared policy that India is to be held in trust for her people. If this be true, Lancashire must stand aside. And if the Swadeshi doctrine is a sound doctrine, Lancashire can stand aside without hurt, though it may sustain a shock for the time being. I think of Swadeshi not as a boycott movement undertaken by way of revenge. I conceive it as a religious principle to be followed by all. I am no economist, but I have read some treatises which show that England could easily become a self-sustained country, growing all the produce she needs. This may

be an utterly rediculous proposition, and perhaps the best proof that it cannot be true is that England is one of the largest importers in the world. But India cannot live for Lancashire or any other country before she is able to live for herself. And she can live for herself only if she produces and is helped to produce everything for her requirements within her own borders. She need not be, she ought not to be, drawn into the vortex of mad and ruinous competition which breeds fratricide, jealousy and many other evils. But who is to stop her great millionaires from entering into the world competition? Certainly not legislation. Force of public opinion and proper education, however, can do a great deal in the desired direction. The hand-loom industry is in a dying condition. I took special care during my wanderings last year to see as many weavers as possible, and my heart ached to find how they had lost, how families had retired from this once flourishing and honourable occupation. If we follow the Swadeshi doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find out neighbours who can supply our wants, and to teach them to supply them where they do not know how to proceed, assuming that there are neighbours who are in want of healthy occupation. Then every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit, exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages as are not locally producible. This may all sound nonsensical. Well, India is a country of nonsense. It is nonsensical to parch one's throat with thirst when a kindly Mussalman is ready to offer pure water to drink. And yet thousands of Hindus would rather die of thirst than drink water from a Muslim household. These nonsensical men can also, once they are convinced that their religion demands that they should wear garments manufactured in India only and eat food only grown in India, decline to wear any other clothing or eat any other food. Lord

Curzon set the fashion for tea-drinking. And that pernicious drug now bids fair to overwhelm the nation. It has already undermined the digestive apparatus of hundreds of thousands of men and women and constitutes an additional tax upon their slender purses. Lord Hardinge can set the fashion for Swadeshi, and almost the whole of India will forswear foreign goods. There is a verse in the Bhagavadgita which, freely rendered, means: masses follow the classes. It is easy to undo the evil if the thinking portion of the community were to take the Swadeshi vow, even though it may for a time cause considerable inconvenience. I hate legislative interference in any department of life. At best it is the lesser evil. But I would tolerate, welcome, indeed, plead for, a stiff protective duty upon foreign goods. Natal, a British Colony, protected its sugar by taxing the sugar that came from another British Colony, Mauritius. England has sinned against India by forcing free trade upon her. It may have been food for her, but it has been poison for this country.

It has often been urged that India cannot adopt Swadeshi in the economic life at any rate. Those who advance this objection do not look upon Swadeshi as a rule of life. With them it is a mere patriotic effort not to be made if it involved any self-denial. Swadeshi, as defined here, is a religious discipline to be undergone in utter disregard of the physical discomfort it may cause to individuals. Under its spell the deprivation of a pin or a needle, because these are not manufactured in India, need cause no terror. A Swadeshist will learn to do without hundreds of things which today he considers necessary. Moreover, those who dismiss Swadeshi from their minds by arguing the impossible, forget that Swadeshi, after all, is a goal to be reached by steady effort. And we would be making for the goal even if we confined Swadeshi to a given set of articles, allowing ourselves as a

temporary measure to use such things as might not be procurable in the country.

There now remains for me to consider one more objection that has been raised against Swadeshi. The objectors consider it to be a most selfish doctrine without any warrant in the civilized code of morality. With them to practise Swadeshi is to revert to barbarism. I cannot enter into a detailed analysis of the proposition. But I would urge that Swadeshi is the only doctrine consistent with the law of humility and love. It is arrogance to think of launching out to serve the whole of India when I am hardly able to serve even my own family. It were better to concentrate my effort upon the family and consider that through them I was serving the whole nation and, if you will, the whole of humanity. This is humility and it is love. The motive will determine the quality of the act. I may serve my family regardless of the sufferings I may cause to others. As, for instance, I may accept an employment which enables me to extort money from people, I enrich myself thereby and then satisfy many unlawful demands of the family. Here I am serving neither the family nor the State. Or I may recognize that God has given me hands and feet only to work with for my sustenance and for that of those who may be dependent upon me. I would then at once simplify my life and that of those whom I can directly reach. In this instance I would have served the family without causing injury to anyone else. Supposing that everyone followed this mode of life, we should have at once an ideal State. All will not reach that state at the same time. But those of us who, realizing its truth, enforce it in practice, will clearly anticipate and accelerate the coming of that happy day. Under this plan of life, in seeming to serve India to the exclusion of every other country, I do not harm any other country. My patriotism is both exclusive and inclusive. It is exclusive in the

sense that in all humility I confine my attention to the land of my birth, but it is inclusive in the sense that my service is not of a competitive or antagonistic nature. *Sic utere tuo ut alienum non in* is not merely a legal maxim, but is a grand doctrine of life. It is the key to a proper practice of ahimsa or love. It is for you, the custodians of a great faith, to set the fashion and show by your preaching, sanctified by practice, that patriotism based on hatred 'killeth', and that patriotism based on love 'giveth life'.

2

THE SWADESHI SPIRIT

It will not be considered an improper statement to say that the Swadeshi movement is in an inane condition. We do not realize that Swaraj is almost wholly obtainable through Swadeshi. If we have no regard for our respective vernaculars, if we dislike our clothes, if our dress repels us, if we are ashamed to wear the sacred *shikha*, if our food is distasteful to us, our climate is not good enough, our people uncouth and unfit for our company, our civilization faulty and the foreign attractive, in short, if everything native is bad and everything foreign pleasing to us, I should not know what Swaraj can mean for us. If everything foreign is to be adopted, surely it will be necessary for us to continue long under foreign tutelage, because foreign civilization has not permeated the masses. It seems to me that before we can appreciate Swaraj we should have not only love but passion for Swadeshi. Every one of our acts should bear the Swadeshi stamp. Swaraj can only be built upon the assumption that most of what is national is on the whole sound. If the view here put forth be correct, the Swadeshi movement ought to be carried on vigorously. Every country that has carried on the Swaraj movement has fully appreciated the Swadeshi spirit. The Scotch Highlanders hold on to their kilts even at the risk of their lives. We humorously call the Highlanders the 'petticoat brigade'. But the whole world testifies to the strength that lies behind that petticoat, and the Highlanders of Scotland will not abandon it even though it is an inconvenient dress and an easy target for the enemy. The object in developing the foregoing argument is

not that we should treasure our faults, but that what is national, even though compratively less agreeable, should be adhered to, and that what is foreign should be avoided, though it may be more agreeable than our own. That which is wanting in our civilization can be supplied by proper effort on our part. I do hope that the Swadeshi spirit will possess every member in this assembly, and that we would carry out the Swadeshi vow in spite of great difficulties and inconvenience. Then Swaraj will be easy of attainment.*

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* From the presidential address delivered at the first Gujarat Provincial Political Conference held at Godhra in October 1917.

3

SWARAJ IN SWADESHI

The real reform that India needs is Swadeshi in its true sense. The immediate problem before us is not how to run the government of the country, but how to feed and clothe ourselves. In 1918 we sent sixty crores of rupees out of India for buying cloth. If we continue to purchase foreign cloth at that rate, we deprive the Indian weaver and spinner of that amount from year to year without practically giving him or her any other work in exchange. No wonder a tenth at least of the population is cruelly half-starved and the majority of the rest underfed. He who has eyes may see for himself that the middle class people are already being underfed and our babies are not getting enough milk for themselves. The Reform Scheme, no matter how liberal it is, will not help to solve the problem in the immediate future. But Swadeshi can solve it *now*.

The Punjab has made the solution still clearer to me. God be thanked that the beautiful women of the Punjab have not yet lost the cunning of their fingers. High or low, they still know the art of spinning. They have not yet burnt their spinning wheels as many Gujarati women have done. It is to me a perfect delight to find them throwing balls of yarn into my lap. They admit they have time at their disposal for spinning. They admit that the khadi woven from their hand-spun yarn is superior to the machine-spun yarn. Our forefathers were well able to clothe themselves with little effort and with perfect comfort without having to buy from the foreign markets.

This beautiful art — and yet so simple — is in danger of being lost if we do not wake up betimes.

The Punjab gives proof of its possibilities. But the Punjab too is fast losing her hold of it. Every year witnesses a decrease in the output of hand-spun yarn. It means greater poverty in our homes and greater idleness. The women who have ceased to spin are not utilizing their time in any other or better manner than gossiping.

But one thing is needful to undo the mischief. If every educated Indian will realize his clear primary duty, he will straightway present the women of his household with a spinning wheel and provide the facilities for learning the art of spinning. Millions of yards of yarn can be produced from day to day. And if every educated Indian will condescend to wear the cloth produced from such yarn, he will support and assist in rebuilding the only possible cottage industry of India.

Without a cottage industry the Indian peasant is doomed. He cannot maintain himself from the produce of the land. He needs a supplementary industry. Spinning is the easiest, the cheapest and the best.

I know this means a revolution in our mental outlook. And it is because it is a revolution that I claim that the way to Swaraj lies through Swadeshi. A nation that can save sixty crores of rupees per year and distribute that large sum amongst its spinners and weavers in their own homes will have acquired powers of organization and industry that must enable it to do everything else necessary for its organic growth.

The dreamy reformer whispers, 'Wait till I get responsible government, and I will protect India's industry without our women having to spin and our weavers having to weave.' This has been actually said by thinking men. I venture to suggest that there is a double fallacy underlying the proposition. India cannot wait for a protective tariff, and protection

will not reduce the cost of clothing. Secondly, mere protection will not benefit the starving millions. They can only be helped by being enabled to supplement their earnings by having a spinning industry restored to them. So whether we have a protective tariff or not, we shall still have to revive the hand-spinning industry and stimulate hand-weaving.

When the war was raging, all available hands in America and England were utilized in the naval yards for building ships, and they built them too at an amazing pace. If I would have my way, I would make every available Indian learn spinning or weaving and make him or her do that work for a certain fixed portion of every day. I would start with schools and colleges, presenting as they do ready-made organized units.

Multiplication of mills cannot solve the problem. They will take too long to overtake the drain, and they cannot distribute the sixty crores in our homes. They can only cause concentration of money and labour and thus make confusion worse confounded.

Young India, 10-12-1919

4

SWADESHI

The National Week closed on Tuesday the 13th. It was in every way a remarkable demonstration of Hindu-Muslim unity, the determination to secure repeal of the Rowlatt Act, and the Satyagraha spirit. The speeches delivered were sober and more to the point than before. There was no disorderliness at any of the meetings of which we have received reports.

What, however, about Swadeshi? Was Swadeshi too not a product of the Satyagraha spirit and activity? It undoubtedly was. But Swadeshi work is the most constructive of all. It does not lend itself to speeches so much as to solid action. It is not possible to save fifty crores of rupees annually by speeches or demonstrations. It involves much more than the saving of this annual drain. It involves the honour of Indian womanhood. Everyone who has any connection with the mill industry knows that the women working in the mills are exposed to temptations and risks to which they ought not to be exposed. Many women for want of home employment accept road repair labour. And only those, who know what this labour is, understand the risks the women run. Give them the spinning wheel, and no woman need ever seek any other employment than sitting at the spinning wheel. Swadeshi means even distribution of wealth from an occupation next in importance only to agriculture. It supplements agriculture and therefore automatically assists materially to solve the problem of our growing poverty. Thus Swadeshi is our veritable *Kamadhenu* supplying all our wants and solving many of our difficult problems. And an occupation, which saves our

honour and provides our livelihood, becomes a religious duty.

How can the great consummation be achieved? The answer is simple. Those who realize the importance of the problem must set about working in one or all of the following directions:

1. Learn spinning yourself whether man or woman. Charge for the labour if you need money, or make a gift of at least one hour's labour to the nation daily.

2. Learn weaving yourself whether for recreation or for maintenance.

3. Make improvements in the present hand-looms and the spinning wheels, and if you are rich, pay for them to those who would make them.

4. Take the Swadeshi vow and patronize the cloth that is both hand-spun and hand-woven.

5. Introduce such cloth among your friends, and believe that there is more art and humanity in khadi whose yarn has been prepared by your poor sisters.

6. If you are a mother, you will give a clean and national culture to your children and make them wear clothes made out of beautiful khadi which is available to millions and which can be most easily produced.

Swadeshi then means the creation of a most perfect organization in which every part works in perfect harmony with every other. If we succeed in bringing into being such an organization, not only is the success of Swadeshi assured, but real Swaraj comes to us as a matter of course.

Young India, 21-4-1920

5

THE USES OF KHADDAR

While the Swadeshi movement is going forward by leaps and bounds and Mussalmans are taking it up as enthusiastically as Hindus, it is well to consider the best methods of promoting Swadeshi. The veriest tyro in Swadeshi knows that we do not manufacture enough cloth to supply our wants. If, therefore, we merely use mill-made cloth, we simply deprive the poor of what they need, or at least increase the price of mill-made cloth. The only way, therefore, to encourage Swadeshi is to manufacture more cloth. Mills cannot grow like mushrooms. We must, therefore, fall back upon hand-woven and hand-spun yarn. Yarn has never perhaps been so dear as it is today, and mills are making fabulous profits out of yarn. Hand-spinning helps its production and cheapens its price.

How to spin yarn and weave cloth is then the question. I know from personal experience that it is possible to flood the market with hand-spun yarn and hand-woven cloth, if the standard cloth comes to be recognized as fit for wear. This cloth is called khaddar in Upper India. It is called khadi in the Bombay Presidency. Thanks to Saraladevi, she has shown that it is possible to make even saris out of khaddar. She thought that she could best express herself during the National Week by wearing khaddar sari and khaddar blouse. And she did it. She attended parties in her khaddar sari. Friends thought it was impossible. They thought a woman who had never worn anything but the finest silk or the finest Dacca Muslin could not possibly bear the weight of heavy khaddar. She falsified all fears and was no less active or less elegant in

her khaddar sari than in her finished silk saris. 'If you do not feel awkward in that sari of yours, you may go anywhere and to any party and you will find it would be well with you.' It was with some such words that her great uncle, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, blessed her when he saw her in her khaddar sari. I relate this sacred incident in order to show that two of the most artistic people of India found nothing inartistic in khaddar. This is the cloth I venture to introduce to the cultured families of India, for on its use hangs the immediate success of the Swadeshi movement during this its infant stage.

To me khaddar is any day more artistic than the finest Dacca muslin for its associations. Khaddar supports today those who were starving. It supports women who have been reclaimed from a life of shame or women who, because they would not go out for work, remained idle and quarrelled among themselves for want of occupation. Khaddar, therefore, has a soul about it. It has an individuality about it. The wearer is able to trace all the processes of its manufacture to the respective manufacturers. If our tastes were not debased, we would prefer khaddar to sticky calico even during the summer season. Let those who are now using it certify, if they will, to the truth of my statement.

Young India, 21-4-1920

6

THE MUSIC OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Slowly but surely the music of perhaps the most ancient machine of India is once more permeating society. Pandit Malaviyaji has stated that he is not going to be satisfied until the Ranis and the Maharanis of India spin yarn for the nation and the Ranas and the Maharanas sit behind the hand-looms and weave cloth for the nation. They have the example of Aurangzeb who made his own caps. A greater emperor—Kabir—was himself a weaver and has immortalized the art in his poems. The queens of Europe, before Europe was caught in Satan's trap, spun yarn and considered it a noble calling. The very words spinster and wife prove the ancient dignity of the art of spinning and weaving. 'When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then a gentleman,' also reminds one of the same fact. Well may Panditji hope to persuade the royalty of India to the ancient calling of this sacred land of ours. Not on the clatter of arms depends the revival of her prosperity and true independence. It depends most largely upon reintroduction, in every home, of the music of the spinning wheel. It gives sweeter music, and is more profitable than the execrable harmonium, concertina and the accordian.

Whilst Panditji is endeavouring in his inimitably suave manner to persuade the Indian royalty to take up the spinning wheel, Shrimati Saraladevi Choudhrani, who is herself a member of the Indian nobility, has learnt the art and has thrown herself heart and soul into the movement. From all the accounts received from her and others, Swadeshi has become a passion with her. She says she feels uncomfortable in her

muslin saris and is content to wear the khaddar saris even in the hot weather. Her khaddar saris continue to preach true Swadeshi more eloquently than her tongue. She has spoken to audiences in Amritsar, Ludhiana and elsewhere, and has succeeded in enlisting the services, for her spinning committee at Amritsar, of Mrs. Ratanchand and Mrs. Bugga Chowdhry and the famous Ratan Devi who, during the frightful night of the 30th April despite the curfew order of General Dyer, sat all alone in the midst of the hundreds of the dead and dying, with her dead husband's cold head in her lap. I venture to tender my congratulations to these ladies. May they find solace in the music of the spinning wheel and in the thought that they are doing national work. I hope that the other ladies of Amritsar will help Saraladevi in her efforts, and that the men of Amritsar will realize their own duty in the matter.

In Bombay, the readers are aware that ladies of noted families have already taken up spinning. Their ranks have been joined by Dr. Mrs. Manekbai Bahadurji who has already learnt the art and who is now trying to introduce it in the Sevasadan. Her Highness the Begum Saheba of Janjira and her sister Mrs. Atia Begum Rehiman have also undertaken to learn the art. I trust that these good ladies will, having learnt spinning, religiously contribute to the nation their daily quota of yarn.

I know that there are friends who laugh at this attempt to revive this great art. They remind me that in these days of mills, sewing machines or typewriters only a lunatic can hope to succeed in reviving the rusticated spinning wheel. These friends forget that the needle has not yet given place to the sewing machine, nor has the hand lost its cunning in spite of the typewriter. There is not the slightest reason why the spinning wheel may not co-exist with the spinning mill even as the domestic kitchen co-exists with the hotels.

Indeed typewriters and sewing machines may go, but the needle and the reed pen will survive. The mills may suffer destruction. The spinning wheel is a national necessity. I would ask sceptics to go to the many poor homes where the spinning wheel is again supplementing their slender resources and ask the inmates whether the spinning wheel has brought joy to their homes.

Thank God, the reward issued by Shri Revashanker Jagjivan bids fare to bear fruit. In a short time India will possess a renovated spinning wheel — a wonderful invention of a patient Deccan artisan. It is made out of simple materials. There is no great complication about it. It will be cheap and capable of being easily mended. It will give more yarn than the ordinary wheel and is capable of being worked by a five year old boy or girl.

But whether the new machine proves what it claims to be or it does not, I feel convinced that the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving will make the largest contribution to the economic and the moral regeneration of India. The millions must have a simple industry to supplement agriculture. Spinning was the cottage industry years ago, and if the millions are to be saved from starvation, they must be enabled to reintroduce spinning in their homes and every village must repossess its own weaver.

Young India, 21-7-1920

7

SWADESHI

In criticizing my article entitled 'The Music of the Spinning Wheel' *The Leader* the other day attributed to me ideas that I have never entertained. And it is necessary, for the purpose of understanding the true value of Swadeshi, to correct some of the current fallacies. *The Leader* considers that I am putting back the hands of the clock of progress by attempting to replace mill-made cloth and mill-spun yarn by hand-woven and hand-spun yarn. Now I am making no such attempt at all. I have no quarrel with the mills. My views are incredibly simple. India requires nearly 13 yards of cloth per head per year. She produces, I believe, less than half the amount. India grows all the cotton she needs. She exports several million bales of cotton to Japan and Lancashire and receives much of it back in manufactured calico, although she is capable of producing all the cloth and all the yarn necessary for supplying her wants by hand-weaving and hand-spinning. India needs to supplement her main occupation, agriculture, with some other employment. Hand-spinning is the only such employment for millions. It was a national employment a century ago. It is not true to say that economic pressure and modern machinery destroyed hand-spinning and hand-weaving. This great industry was destroyed or almost destroyed by extraordinary and immoral means adopted by the East India Company. This national industry is capable of being revived by exertion and a change in the national taste without damaging the mill industry. Increase of mills is no present remedy for supplying the deficiency. The deficiency can be easily supplied only by hand-

spinning and hand-weaving. If this employment were revived, it would prevent sixty million rupees from being annually drained from the country and distribute the amount among lacs of poor women in their own cottages. I therefore consider Swadeshi as an automatic, though partial, solution of the problem of India's grinding poverty. It also constitutes a ready-made insurance policy in times of scarcity of rain.

But two things are needful to bring about the needed revival — to create a taste for khaddar, and to provide an organization for the distribution of carded cotton and collection of yarn against payment.

In one year, by the silent labour of a few men, several thousand rupees have been distributed in Gujarat among several thousand poor women who are glad enough to earn a few pice per day to buy milk for their children, etc.

The argument does not apply to the sugar industry as *The Leader* has attempted. There is not sufficient cane grown in India to supply India's wants. Sugar was never a national and supplementary industry. Foreign sugar has not supplanted Indian sugar. India's wants of sugar have grown and she therefore imports more sugar. But this importation does not institute a drain in the sense in which importation of foreign cloth does. Production of more sugar means more scientific agriculture, more and better machinery for crushing and refining. The sugar industry, therefore, stands on a different platform. Swadeshi in sugar is desirable, Swadeshi in cloth is an urgent necessity.

Young India, 18-8-1920

8

THE SECRET OF SWARAJ

The Congress resolution has rightly emphasized the importance of Swadeshi and thereanent of greater sacrifice by merchants.

India cannot be free so long as India voluntarily encourages or tolerates the economic drain which has been going on for the past century and a half. Boycott of foreign goods means no more and no less than boycott of foreign cloth. Foreign cloth constitutes the largest drain voluntarily permitted by us. It means sixty crores of rupees annually paid by us for piece-goods. If India can make a successful effort to stop that drain, she can gain Swaraj by that one act.

India was enslaved for satisfying the greed of the foreign cloth manufacturer. When the East India Company came in, we were able to manufacture all the cloth we needed, and more for export. By processes that need not be described here, India has become practically wholly dependent upon foreign manufacture for her clothing.

But we ought not to be dependent. India has the ability to manufacture all her cloth if her children will work for it. Fortunately India has yet enough weavers to supplement the outturn of her mills. The mills do not and cannot immediately manufacture all the cloth we want. The reader may not know that, even at the present moment, the weavers weave more cloth than the mills. But the latter weave five crore yards of fine foreign counts, equal to forty crore yards of coarser counts. The way to carry out a successful boycott of foreign cloth is to increase the output of yarn. And this can only be done by hand-spinning.

To bring about such a boycott, it is necessary for our merchants to stop all foreign importation, and to sell out, even at a loss, all foreign cloth already stocked in India, preferably to foreign buyers. They must cease to speculate in cotton, and keep all the cotton required for home use. They must stop purchasing all foreign cotton.

The millowners should work their mills not for their profits but as a national trust and therefore cease to spin finer counts, and weave only for the home market.

The householder has to revise his or her ideas of fashion and, at least for the time being, suspend the use of fine garments which are not always worn to cover the body. He should train himself to see art and beauty in the spotlessly white khaddar and to appreciate its soft unevenness. The householder must learn to use cloth as a miser use his horde.

And even when the householders have revised their tastes about dress, somebody will have to spin yarn for the weavers. This can only be done by everyone spinning during spare hours for either love or money.

We are engaged in a spiritual war. We are not living in normal times. Normal activities are always suspended in abnormal times. And if we are out to gain Swaraj in a year's time, it means that we must concentrate upon our goal to the exclusion of everything else. I therefore venture to suggest to the students all over India to suspend their normal studies for one year and devote their time to the manufacture of yarn by hand-spinning. It will be their greatest act of service to the motherland, and their most natural contribution to the attainment of Swaraj. During the late war our rulers attempted to turn every factory into an arsenal for turning out bullets of lead. During this war of ours I suggest every national school and college being turned into a factory

for preparing cones of yarns for the nation. The students will lose nothing by the occupation; they will gain a kingdom here and hereafter. There is a famine of cloth in India. To assist in removing this dearth is surely an act of merit. If it is sinful to use foreign yarn; it is a virtue to manufacture more Swadeshi yarn in order to enable us to cope with the want that would be created by the disuse of foreign yarn.

The obvious question asked would be, if it is so necessary to manufacture yarn, why not pay every poor person to do so? The answer is that hand-spinning is not, and never was, a calling like weaving, carpentry, etc. Under the pre-British economy of India spinning was an honourable and leisurely occupation for the women of India. It is difficult to revive the art among the women in the time at our disposal. But it is incredibly simple and easy for the school-goers to respond to the nation's call. Let no one decry the work as being derogatory to the dignity of man or students. It was an art confined to the women of India because the latter had more leisure. And being graceful, musical, and as it did not involve any great exertion, it had become the monopoly of women. But it is certainly as graceful for either sex as is music for instance. In hand-spinning is hidden the protection of women's virtue, the insurance against famine, and the cheapening of prices. In it is hidden the secret of Swaraj. The revival of hand-spinning is the least penance we must do for the sin of our forefathers in having succumbed to the satanic influences of the foreign manufacturer.

The school-goers will restore hand-spinning to its respectable status. They will hasten the process of making khaddar fashionable. For no mother or father worth the name will refuse to wear cloth made out of yarn spun by their children. And the scholars' practical recognition of art will compel the attention of the weavers of India. If we are to wean the Punjabi

from the calling not of a soldier but of the murderer of innocent and free people of other lands, we must give back to him the occupation of weaving. The race of the peaceful julahas of the Punjab is all but extinct. It is for the scholars of the Punjab to make it possible for the Punjabi weaver to return to his innocent calling.

I hope to show in a future issue how easy it is to introduce this change in the schools and how quickly, on these terms, we can nationalize our schools and colleges. Everywhere the students have asked me what new things I would introduce into our nationalized schools. I have invariably told them I would certainly introduce spinning. I feel so much more clearly than ever before that during the transition period we must devote exclusive attention to spinning and certain other things of immediate national use, so as to make up for past neglect. And the students will be better able and equipped to enter upon the new course of studies.

Do I want to put back the hand of the clock of progress? Do I want to replace the mills by hand-spinning and hand-weaving? Do I want to replace the railway by the country cart? Do I want to destroy machinery altogether? These questions have been asked by some journalists and public men. My answer is: I would not weep over the disappearance of machinery or consider it a calamity. But I have no design upon machinery as such. What I want to do at the present moment is to supplement the production of yarn and cloth through our mills, save the millions we send out of India, and distribute them in our cottages. This I cannot do unless and until the nation is prepared to devote its leisure hours to hand-spinning. To that end we must adopt the methods I have ventured to suggest for popularizing spinning as a duty rather than as a means of livelihood.

Young India, 19-1-1921

9

HAND-SPINNING AGAIN

The Servant of India has a fling too at spinning, and that is based, as I shall presently show, on ignorance of the facts. Spinning does protect a woman's virtue, because it enables women, who are today working on public roads and are often in danger of having their modesty outraged, to protect themselves, and I know no other occupation that lacs of women can follow save spinning. Let me inform the jesting writer that several women have already returned to the sanctity of their homes and taken to spinning which, they say, is the one occupation which means so much *barkat* (blessing). I claim for it the properties of a musical instrument, for whilst a hungry and naked woman will refuse to dance to the accompaniment of a piano, I have seen women beaming with joy to see the spinning wheel work, for they know that they can through that rustic instrument both feed and clothe themselves.

Yes, it does solve the problem of India's chronic poverty and is an insurance against famine. The writer of the jests may not know the scandals that I know about irrigation and relief works. These works are largely a fraud. But if my wise counsellors will devote themselves to introducing the wheel in every home, I promise that the wheel will be an almost complete protection against famine. It is idle to cite Austria. I admit the poverty and limitations of my humanity. I can only think of India's *Kamadhenu*, and the spinning wheel is that for India. For India had the spinning wheel in every home before the advent of the East India Company. India being a cotton-growing country, it must be considered a

crime to import a single yard of yarn from outside. The figures quoted by the writer are irrelevant.

The fact is that in spite of the manufacture of 62.7 crores lbs. of yarn in 1917-18 India imported several crore yards of foreign yarn which were woven by the mills as well as the weavers. The writer does not also seem to know that more cloth is today woven by our weavers than by mills, but the bulk of it is foreign yarn and therefore our weavers are supporting foreign spinners. I would not mind it much if we were doing something else instead. When spinning was almost compulsorily stopped nothing replaced it save slavery and idleness. Our mills cannot today spin enough for our wants, and if they did, they would not keep down prices unless they were compelled. They are frankly money-makers and will not therefore regulate prices according to the needs of the nation. Hand-spinning is, therefore, designed to put millions of rupees in the hands of poor villagers. Every agricultural country requires a supplementary industry to enable the peasants to utilize the spare hours. Such industry for India has always been spinning. Is it such a visionary ideal—an attempt to revive an ancient occupation whose destruction has brought on slavery, pauperism and disappearance of the inimitable artistic talent which was once all expressed in the wonderful fabric of India and which was the envy of the world?

And now a few figures. One boy could, if he worked, say, four hours daily, spin ¼lb. of yarn. 64,000 students would, therefore, spin 16,000 lbs. per day, and therefore feed 8,000 weavers if a weaver wove 2 lbs. of hand-spun yarn. But the students and others are required to spin during this year of purification by way of penance in order to popularize spinning and to add to the manufacture of hand-spun yarn so as to overtake full manufacture during the current year. The nation may be too lazy to do

it. But if all put their hands to this work, it is incredibly easy, it involves very little sacrifice, and saves an annual drain of sixty crores, even if it does nothing else. I have discussed the matter with many mill-owners, several economists and men of business, and no one has yet been able to challenge the position herein set forth. I do expect *The Servant of India* to treat a serious subject with seriousness and accuracy of information.

Young India, 16-2-1921

10

SWADESHI

Swadeshi propaganda in its intensive and exclusive form had to come, and it has come in its order. It was, and is, part of the non-cooperation programme. It is, I claim, the biggest, the safest and the surest part. It could not be taken up earlier in its present form. The country had to see its way clear to the spinning wheel. It had to be purged of the old superstitions and prejudices. The country had to appreciate the futility of the boycott of British goods merely, and equally of all foreign goods. It had to see that it lost its liberty by giving up Swadeshi in cloth, and that it could regain it by reverting to hand-spun and hand-woven cloth. It had to see that it was not even so much the military drain as the loss of this supplementary industry that sapped India's vitality and made famines an ever-recurring event in Indian life. Men with faith in the spinning wheel had to rise in every province, and people had to appreciate the beauty and the use of khaddar.

All these things have now happened. The crore men and women and the crore rupees are required to resuscitate this national *dharma*. The problem is not that of a few charkhas but of putting charkhas in every one of the six crore homes. The problem is that of manufacturing and distributing the whole of the cloth required by India. It cannot be done by one crore rupees. But if India gives one crore rupees, one crore men and women, and introduces two million charkhas in working order in as many homes before 30th June, she is nearly ready for Swaraj, because the effort will have created, in the nation as a whole, all the qualities that make a nation good, great, self-

reliant and self-contained. When the nation has, by voluntary effort, completed its boycott of foreign cloth, it will be ready for Swaraj.

Then I promise that the various forts in the Indian cities will, instead of being an insolent menace to the freedom of India, become playgrounds for her children. Then the relations between Englishmen and ourselves will have been purified. Then the Lancashire vote will have been sterilized. And Englishmen will, if they choose, remain in India as friends and equals, with one sole aim — truly of benefiting and helping India. Non-cooperation is a movement intended to invite Englishmen to co-operate with us on honourable terms or retire from our land. It is a movement to place our relations on a pure basis to define them in a manner consistent with our self-respect and dignity.

But call the movement by any other name. Call it 'Swadeshi and temperance'. Assume that all these previous months have been a waste of effort. I invite the Government and the moderate friends to co-operate with the nation in making hand-spinning universal and in making drinking a crime. Neither party need speculate as to the result of these two movements. The tree will be judged by its fruit.

Young India, 20-4-1921

11

THE MESSAGE OF THE CHARKHA

The Indian Social Reformer has published a note from a correspondent in praise of the spinning wheel. The correspondent in the course of his remarks hopes that the movement will be so organized that the spinners may not weary of it. Shri Amritlal Thakkar, in his valuable note (published in *The Servant of India*) on the experiments which he is conducting in Kathiawad says that the charkha has been taken up by the peasant women. They are not likely to weary, for to them it is a source of livelihood to which they were used before. It had dried up because there was no demand for their yarn. Townspeople who have taken to spinning may weary, if they have done so as a craze or a fashion. Those only will be faithful who consider it their duty to devote their spare hours to doing what is today the most useful work for the country. The third class of spinners are the school-going children. I expect the greatest results from the experiment of introducing the charkha in the national schools. If it is conducted on scientific lines by teachers who believe in the charkha as the most efficient means of making education available to the seven and a half lacs of villages in India, there is not only no danger of weariness, but every prospect of the nation being able to solve the problem of financing mass education without any extra taxation and without having to fall back upon immoral sources of revenue.

The writer in *The Indian Social Reformer* suggests that an attempt should be made to produce finer counts on the spinning wheel. I may assure him that the process has already begun, but it will be some

time before we arrive at the finish of the Dacca muslin or even twenty counts. Seeing that hand-spinning was only revived last September and India began to believe in it somewhat only in December, the progress it has made may be regarded as phenomenal.

The writer's complaint that hand-spun yarn is not being woven as fast as it is spun, is partly true. But the remedy is not so much to increase the number of looms, as to persuade the existing weavers to use hand-spun yarn. Weaving is a much more complex process than spinning. It is not, like spinning, only a supplementary industry, but a complete means of livelihood. It therefore never died out. There are enough weavers and enough looms in India to replace the whole of the foreign import of cloth. It should be understood that our looms — thousands of them in Madras, Maharashtra and Bengal — are engaged in weaving the fine yarn imported from Japan and Manchester. We must utilize these for weaving hand-spun yarn. And for that purpose the nation has to revise its taste for the thin, tawdry and useless muslins. I see no art in weaving muslins that do not cover but only expose the body. Our ideas of art must undergo a change. But even if the universal weaving of thin fabric be considered desirable in normal conditions, at the present moment, whilst we are making a mighty effort to become free and self-supporting, we must be content to wear the cloth that our hand-spun yarn may yield. We have therefore to ask the fashionable on the one hand to be satisfied with coarser garments; we must educate the spinners on the other hand to spin finer and more even yarn.

The writer pleads for a reduction in the prices charged by mill-owners for their manufactures. When lovers of Swadeshi begin to consider it their duty to wear khaddar, when the required number of spinning

wheels are working and the weavers are weaving handspun yarn, the mill-owners will be bound to reduce prices. It seems almost hopeless merely to appeal to the patriotism of those whose chief aim is to increase their own profits.

Incongruities pointed out by the writer such as the wearing of khaddar on public occasions and at other times of the most fashionable English suits, and the smoking of most expensive cigars by wearers of khaddar, must disappear in course of time, as the new fashion gains strength. It is my claim that as soon as we have completed the boycott of foreign cloth we shall have evolved so far that we shall necessarily give up the present absurdities and remodel national life in keeping with the ideal of simplicity and domesticity implanted in the bosom of the masses. We will not then be dragged into an imperialism which is built upon exploitation of the weaker races of the earth, and the acceptance of a giddy materialistic civilization protected by naval and air forces that have made peaceful living almost impossible. On the contrary we shall then refine that imperialism into a commonwealth of nations which will combine, if they do, for the purpose of giving their best to the world and of protecting, not by brute force but by self-suffering, the weaker nations or races of the earth. Non-cooperation aims at nothing less than this revolution in the thought world. Such a transformation can come only after the complete success of the spinning wheel. India can become fit for delivering such a message, when she has become proof against temptation and therefore attacks from outside, by becoming self-contained regarding two of her chief needs — food and clothing.

Young India, 29-6-1921

TO EVERY ENGLISHMAN IN INDIA*

But I do ask you to help us in the boycott of foreign cloth and in the anti-drink campaign.

The Lancashire cloth, as English historians have shown, was forced upon India, and her own world-famed manufactures were deliberately and systematically ruined. India is, therefore, at the mercy not only of Lancashire but also of Japan, France and America. Just see what this has meant to India. We send out of India every year sixty crores (more or less) of rupees for cloth. We grow enough cotton for our own cloth. Is it not madness to send cotton outside India and have it manufactured into cloth there and shipped to us? Was it right to reduce India to such a helpless state?

A hundred and fifty years ago we manufactured all our cloth. Our women spun fine yarn in their own cottages, and supplemented the earnings of their husbands. The village weavers wove that yarn. It was an indispensable part of national economy in a vast agricultural country like ours. It enabled us in a most natural manner to utilize our leisure. Today our women have lost the cunning of their hands, and the enforced idleness of millions has impoverished the land. Many weavers have become sweepers. Some have taken to the profession of hired soldiers. Half the race of artistic weavers has died out, and the other half is weaving imported foreign yarn for want of finer hand-spun yarn.

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* From an article entitled "To Every Englishman in India"

You will perhaps now understand what boycott of foreign cloth means to India. It is not devised as a punishment. If the Government were today to redress the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs and consent to India attaining immediate Swaraj, the boycott movement must still continue. Swaraj means at least the power to conserve Indian industries that are vital to the economic existence of the nation, and to prohibit such imports as may interfere with such existence. Agriculture and hand-spinning are the two lungs of the national body. They must be protected against consumption at any cost.

This matter does not admit of any waiting. The interests of the foreign manufacturers and the Indian importers cannot be considered when the whole nation is starving for want of a large productive occupation ancillary to agriculture.

You will not mistake this for a movement of general boycott of foreign goods. India does not wish to shut herself out of international commerce. Things other than cloth which can be better made outside India, she must gratefully receive upon terms advantageous to the contracting parties. Nothing can be forced upon her. But I do not wish to peep into the future. I am certainly hoping that before long it would be possible for India to co-operate with England on equal terms. Then will be the time for examining trade relations. For the time being I bespeak your help in bringing about a boycott of foreign cloth.

Young India, 13-7-1921

13

TO THE WOMEN OF INDIA

Dear Sisters,

The All India Congress Committee has come to a momentous decision in fixing the 30th September next as the final date for completing the boycott of foreign cloth begun by the sacrificial fire lit on the 31st July in Bombay in memory of Lokamanya Tilak. I was accorded the privilege of setting fire to the huge pile containing costly saris and other dresses which you have hitherto considered fine and beautiful. I feel that it was right and wise on the part of the sisters who gave their costly clothing. Its destruction was the most economical use you could have made of it, even as destruction of plague-infected articles is their most economical and best use. It was a necessary surgical operation designed to avert more serious complaints in the body politic.

The women of India have during the past twelve months worked wonders on behalf of the motherland. You have silently worked away as angels of mercy. You have parted with your cash and your fine jewellery. You have wandered from house to house to make collections. Some of you have even assisted in picketing. Some of you, who were used to fine dresses of variegated colours and had a number of changes during the day, have now adopted the white and spotless but heavy khadi sari reminding one of a woman's innate purity. You have done all this for the sake of India, for the sake of the Khilafat, for the sake of the Punjab. There is no guile about your word or work. Yours is the purest sacrifice untainted by anger or hate. Let me confess to you that your spontaneous and loving response all over India has

convinced me that God is with us. No other proof of our struggle being one of self-purification is needed than that lacs of India's women are actively helping it.

Having given much, more is now required of you. Men bore the principal share of the subscriptions to the Tilak Swaraj Fund. But completion of the Swadeshi programme is possible only if you give the largest share. Boycott is impossible unless you will surrender the whole of your foreign clothing. So long as the taste persists, so long is complete renunciation impossible. And boycott means complete renunciation. We must be prepared to be satisfied with such cloth as India can produce, even as we are thankfully content with such children as God gives us. I have not known a mother throwing away her baby even though it may appear ugly to an outsider. So should it be with the patriotic women of India about Indian manufactures. And for you only hand-spun and hand-woven can be regarded as Indian manufactures. During the transition stage you can only get coarse khadi in abundance. You may add all the art to it that your taste allows or requires. And if you will be satisfied with coarse khadi for a few months, India need not despair of seeing a revival of the fine rich and coloured garments of old which were once the envy and the despair of the world. I assure you that a six months' course of self-denial will show you that what we today regard as artistic is only falsely so, and that true art takes note not merely of form but also of what lies behind. There is an art that kills and an art that gives life. The fine fabric that we have imported from the West or the Far East has literally killed millions of our brothers and sisters, and delivered thousands of our dear sisters to a life of shame. True art must be evidence of happiness, contentment and purity of its authors. And if you will have such art revived in our midst, the use of khadi is obligatory on the best of you at the present moment.

And not only is the use of khadi necessary for the success of the Swadeshi programme, but it is imperative for every one of you to spin during your leisure hours. I have suggested to boys and men also that they should spin. Thousands of them, I know, are spinning daily. But the main burden of spinning must, as of old, fall on your shoulders. Two hundred years ago the women of India spun not only for home demand but also for foreign lands. They spun not merely coarse counts but the finest that the world has ever spun. No machine has yet reached the fineness of the yarn spun by our ancestors. If then we are to cope with the demand for khadi during the two months and afterwards, you must form spinning clubs, institute spinning competitions, and flood the Indian market with hand-spun yarn. For this purpose some of you have to become experts in spinning, carding, and adjusting the spinning wheels. This means ceaseless toil. You will not look upon spinning as means of livelihood. For the middle class it should supplement the income of the family, and for very poor women it is undoubtedly a means of livelihood. The spinning wheel should be, as it was, the widow's loving companion. But for you who will read this appeal, it is presented as a duty, as *dharma*. If all the well-to-do women of India were to spin a certain quantity daily, they would make yarn cheap and bring about much more quickly than otherwise the required fineness.

The economic and the moral salvation of India thus rests mainly with you. The future of India lies on your knees, for you will nurture the future generation. You can bring up the children of India to become simple, God-fearing and brave men and women, or you can coddle them to be weaklings unfit to brave the storms of life and used to foreign fineries which they would find it difficult in after life to discard. The next few weeks will show of

what stuff the women of India are made. I have not the shadow of a doubt as to your choice. The destiny of India is far safer in your hands than in the hands of a Government that has so exploited India's resources that she has lost faith in herself. At every one of the women's meetings I have asked for your blessings for the national effort, and I have done so in the belief that you are pure, simple and godly enough to give them with effect. You can ensure the fruitfulness of your blessings by giving up your foreign cloth and during your spare hours ceaselessly spinning for the nation.

I remain,
Your devoted brother,
M. K. GANDHI

Young India, 11-8-1921

14

ETHICS OF DESTRUCTION

The reader, I am sure, will appreciate my sharing with him the following pathetic and beautiful letter from Mr. Andrews:

> "I know that your burning of foreign cloth is with the idea of helping the poor, but I feel that there you have gone wrong. If you succeed in boycotting all, or a greater part of, foreign cloth, it seems to me self-evident that the price of mill-made cloth will rise and it will hit the poor. But there is besides a subtle appeal to racial feeling in that word 'foreign', which day by day seems to me to need checking and not fomenting. The picture of you lighting that great pile, including beautiful fabrics, shocked me intensely. We seem to be losing sight of the great beautiful world to which we belong and concentrating selfishly on India, and this must (I fear) lead back to the old bad selfish nationalism. If so, we get into the vicious circle from which Europe is now trying so desperately to escape. But I cannot argue it out. I can only say again that it shocked me and seemed to me a form almost of violence; and yet I know how violence is abhorrent to you. I do not at all like this question of foreign cloth being made into a religion.
>
> I was supremely happy when you were dealing great giant blows at the great fundamental moral evils, drunkenness, drug-taking, untouchability, race arrogance, etc., and when you were, with such wonderful and beautiful tenderness, dealing with the hideous vice of prostitution. But lighting bonfires of foreign cloth and telling people it is a religious *sin* to wear it, destroying in the fire the noble handi-

work of one's fellow men and women, one's brothers and sisters abroad, saying it would be 'defiling' to wear it — I cannot tell you how different all this appears to me. Do you know I almost fear now to wear the khaddar that you have given me, lest I should appear to be judging other people as a Pharisee would, saying, 'I am holier than thou!' I never felt like this before.

You know how, when anything that you do hurts me, I must cry out to you, and this has hurt me.

I wrote *The Modern Review* articles which I have enclosed with such eager joy, because I felt certain that I had found your own life's meaning. But now my mind cries out to you that you are doing something violent, distorted, unnatural . . . . You know that my love is stronger than ever, just as your love for your brother was when you felt he was doing something wrong. Do tell me what you mean. What you said in *Young India* about burning did not convince me a bit."

It is so like him. Whenever he feels hurt over anything I have done (and this is by no means the first such occasion), he deluges me with letters without waiting for an answer. For it is love speaking to love, not arguing. It is the outpouring of an anguished heart. And so it has been over the burning of foreign clothes.

What Mr. Andrews has put in loving language, correspondents already out of tune with me have written in coarse, angry and even vulgar words. Mr. Andrews' being words of love and sorrow have gone deep down in me and command a full answer, whereas the angry ones I was obliged to lay aside save for a passing reference. Mr. Andrews' being non-violent, charged with love, have told. The others being violent, charged with malice, took no effect and would have evoked angry retorts, if I was capable of or disposed

to such retorts. Mr. Andrews' letter is a type of non-violence we need in order to win Swaraj quickly.

This is, however, by the way. I remain just as convinced as ever of the necessity of burning. There is no emphasis in the process on race feeling. I would have done precisely the same thing in the sacred and select family or friendly circles. In all I do or advise the infallible test I apply is whether the particular action will hold good in regard to the dearest and the nearest. The teaching of the faith I hold dear is unmistakable and unequivocal in the matter. I must be the same to friend and foe. And it is this conviction which makes me so sure of so many of my acts which often puzzle friends.

I remember having thrown into the sea a pair of beautiful field glasses because they were a constant bone of contention between a dear friend and myself. He felt the hesitation at first, but he saw the right of the destruction of a beautiful and costly thing, a present withal from a friend. Experience shows that the richest gifts must be destroyed without compensation and hesitation if they hinder one's moral progress. Will it not be held a sacred duty to consign to the flames most precious heirlooms if they are plague-infected? I can remember having broken to bits, when a young man, the loved bangles of my own dear wife because they were a matter of difference between us. And if I remember right, they were a gift from her mother. I did it, not out of hate but out of love — ignorant, I now see in my ripe age. The destruction helped us and brought us nearer.

If the emphasis were on all foreign things, it would be racial, parochial and wicked. The emphasis is on all foreign cloth. The restriction makes all the difference in the world. I do not want to shut out English lever watches or the beautiful Japanese lacquer work. But I must destroy all the choicest wines of Europe, even though they might have been prepared

and preserved with all the most exquisite care and attention. Satan's snares are most subtly laid, and they are the most tempting when the dividing line between right and wrong is so thin as to be imperceptible. But the line is there all the same, rigid and inflexible. Any crossing of it may mean certain death.

India is racial today. It is with the utmost effort that I find it possible to keep under check the evil passions of the people. The general body of the people are filled with ill-will, because they are weak and hopelessly ignorant of the way to shed their weakness. I am transferring the ill-will from men to things.

Love of foreign cloth has brought foreign domination, pauperism and, what is worst, shame to many a home. The reader may not know that not long ago hundreds of 'untouchable' weavers of Kathiawad, having found their calling gone, became sweepers for the Bombay municipality. And the life of these men has become so difficult that many lose their children and become physical and moral wrecks; some are helpless witnesses of the shame of their daughters and even their wives. The reader may not know that many women of this class in Gujarat, for want of domestic occupation, have taken to work on public roads where, under pressure of one sort or another, they are obliged to sell their honour. The reader may not know that the proud weavers of the Punjab, for want of occupation, not many years ago took to the sword, and were instrumental in killing the proud and innocent Arabs at the bidding of their officers, and not for the sake of their country but for the sake of their livelihood. It is difficult to make a successful appeal to these deluded hirelings and wean them from their murderous profession. What was once an honourable and artistic calling is now held by them to be disreputable. The weavers of Dacca, when they wove the world-famous *shubnum*, could not have been considered disreputable.

Is it now any wonder, if I consider it a sin to touch foreign cloth? Will it not be a sin for a man with a very delicate digestive apparatus to eat rich foods? Must he not destroy them or give them away? I know what I would do with rich foods, if I had a son lying in bed who must not eat them but would still gladly have them. In order to wean him from the hankering I would, though able to digest them myself, refrain from eating them and destroy them in his presence, so that the sin of eating may be borne home to him.

If destruction of foreign cloth be a sound proposition from the highest moral standpoint, the possibility of a rise in the price of Swadeshi cloth need not frighten us. Destruction is the quickest method of stimulating production. By one supreme effort and swift destruction India has to be awakened from her torpor and enforced idleness. Here is what Mr. Allen, the author of the Assam Gazetteer, wrote in 1905 of Kamrup:

> "Of recent years, the use of imported clothing has been coming into favour,—an innovation which has little to recommend it, as the time formerly spent at the loom is not as a rule assigned to any other useful occupation."

The Assamese to whom I have spoken realize the truth of these words to their cost. Foreign cloth to India is like foreign matter to the body. The destruction of the former is as necessary for the health of India as of the latter for the health of the body. Once grant the immediate necessity of Swadeshi, and there is no half-way house to destruction.

Nor need we be afraid, by evolving the fullest Swadeshi spirit, of developing a spirit of narrowness and exclusiveness. We must protect our own bodies from disruption through indulgence before we would protect the sanctity of others. India is today nothing but a dead mass movable at the will of another.

Let her become alive by self-purification, i. e. self-restraint and self-denial, and she will be a boon to herself and mankind. Let her be carelessly self-indulgent, aggressive, grasping; and if she rises, she will do so like Kumbhakarna only to destroy and be a curse to herself and mankind.

And for a firm believer in Swadeshi there need be no pharisaical self-satisfaction in wearing khadi. A Pharisee is a patron of virtue. The wearer of khadi from a Swadeshi standpoint is like a man making use of his lungs. A natural and obligatory act has got to be performed, whether others do it out of impure motives or refrain altogether because they do not believe in its necessity or utility.

Young India, 1-9-1921

15

THE POOR MAN'S WAY

Only a few days are left for us to complete the boycott of foreign cloth enjoined by the All India Congress Committee. It is not yet too late if every Congress worker will devote his or her exclusive attention to the boycott. If everyone realizes that without Swadeshi, i. e. boycott of foreign cloth and manufacture of all the required cloth by hand-spinning and hand-weaving, there is no Swaraj, and that without Swaraj there is no settlement of the Khilafat and the Punjab problems, there should be no difficulty in bringing about the desired boycott and the required manufacture.

I know that many will find it difficult to replace their foreign cloth all at once. Millions are too poor to buy enough khadi to replace the discarded cloth. To them I repeat my advice given on the Madras beach. Let them be satisfied with a mere loin cloth. In our climate we hardly need more to protect our bodies during the warm months of the year. Let there be no prudery about dress. India has never insisted on full covering of the body for the males as a test of culture.

I give the advice under a full sense of my responsibility. In order, therefore, to set the example, I propose to discard at least up to the 31st of October my *topi* and vest, and to content myself with only a loin cloth, and a *chaddar* whenever found necessary for the protection of the body. I adopt the change, because I have always hesitated to advise anything I may not myself be prepared to follow, and also because I am anxious by leading the way to make it easy for those who cannot afford a change on discarding their foreign

garments. I consider the renunciation to be also necessary for me as a sign of mourning, and a bare head and a bare body is such a sign in my part of the country. That we are in mourning is more and more being borne home to me as the end of the year is approaching and we are still without Swaraj. I wish to state clearly that I do not expect co-workers to renounce the use of the vest and the *topi* unless they find it necessary to do so for their own work.

I am positive that every province and every district can, if there are enough workers, manufacture sufficient for its needs in one month. And to that end for one month I advise complete suspension of every activity but Swadeshi. I would even withdraw pickets from liquor shops, trusting the drinker to recognize the new spirit of purification. I would advise every non-cooperator to treat imprisonment as his ordinary lot in life and not think anything about it. If only we can go through the course of organizing manufacture and collecting foreign cloth during the month of October, abstaining from all meetings and excitements, we shall produce an atmosphere calm and peaceful enough to embark upon civil disobedience, if it is then found necessary. But I have a settled conviction that, if we exhibit the strength of character, the faculty for organizing and the power of exemplary self-control, all of which are necessary for full Swadeshi, we shall attain Swaraj without more.

Young India, 29-9-1921

16

THE GREAT SENTINEL

The Bard of Santiniketan has contributed to *The Modern Review* a brilliant essay on the present movement. It is a series of word pictures which he alone can paint. It is an eloquent protest against authority, slave mentality, or whatever description one gives of blind acceptance of a passing mania whether out of fear or hope. It is a welcome and wholesome reminder to all workers that we must not be impatient, we must not impose authority no matter how great. The Poet tells us summarily to reject anything and everything that does not appeal to our reason or heart. If we would gain Swaraj, we must stand for Truth as we know it at any cost. A reformer who is enraged because his message is not accepted must retire to the forest to learn how to watch, wait and pray. With all this one must heartily agree, and the Poet deserves the thanks of his countrymen for standing up for Truth and Reason. There is no doubt that our last state will be worse than our first, if we surrender our reason into somebody's keeping. And I would feel extremely sorry to discover that the country had unthinkingly and blindly followed all I had said or done. I am quite conscious of the fact that blind surrender to love is often more mischievous than a forced surrender to the lash of the tyrant. There is hope for the slave of the brute, none for that of love. Love is needed to strengthen the weak; love becomes tyrannical when it exacts obedience from an unbeliever. To mutter a *mantra* without knowing its value is unmanly. It is good, therefore, that the Poet has invited all who are slavishly mimicking the call of the charkha boldly to declare their revolt. His essay serves

as a warning to us all who in our impatience are betrayed into intolerance or even violence against those who differ from us. I regard the Poet as a sentinel warning us against the approach of enemies called Bigotry, Lethargy, Intolerance, Ignorance, Inertia, and other members of that brood.

But whilst I agree with all that the Poet has said as to the necessity of watchfulness lest we cease to think, I must not be understood to endorse the proposition that there is any such blind obedience on a large scale in the country today. I have again and again appealed to reason, and let me assure him that, if happily the country has come to believe in the spinning wheel as the giver of plenty, it has done so after laborious thinking, after great hesitation. I am not sure that even now educated India has assimilated the truth underlying the charkha. He must not mistake the surface dirt for the substance underneath. Let him go deeper and see for himself whether the charkha has been accepted from blind faith or from reasoned necessity.

I do indeed ask the poet and the page to ply the wheel as a sacrament. When there is war, the poet lays down the lyre, the lawyer his law reports, the school-boy his books. The poet will sing the true note after the war is over, the lawyer will have occasion to go to his law books when people have time to fight among themselves. When a house is on fire, *all* the inmates go out, and each one takes up a bucket to quench the fire. When all about me are dying for want of food, the only occupation permissible to me is to feed the hungry. It is my conviction that India is a house on fire, because its manhood is being daily scorched, it is dying of hunger because it has no work to buy food with. Khulna is starving not because the people cannot work, but because they have no work. The Ceded Districts are passing successively through a fourth famine. Orissa is a land suffering

from chronic famine. Our cities are *not* India. India lives in her seven and a half lacs of villages, and the cities live upon the villages. They do not bring their wealth from other countries. The city people are brokers and commission agents for the big houses of Europe, America and Japan. The cities have co-operated with the latter in the bleeding process that has gone on for the past two hundred years. It is my belief based on experience that India is daily growing poorer. The circulation about her feet and legs has almost stopped. And if we do not take care, she will collapse altogether.

To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages. God created man to work for his food, and said that those who ate without work were thieves. Eighty per cent of India are compulsorily thieves half the year. Is it any wonder if India has become one vast prison? Hunger is the argument that is driving India to the spinning wheel. The call of the spinning wheel is the noblest of all. Because it is the call of love. And love is Swaraj. The spinning wheel will 'curb the mind' when time spent on necessary physical labour can be said to do so. We must think of millions who are today less than animals, who are almost in a dying state. The spinning wheel is the reviving draught for the millions of our dying countrymen and countrywomen. 'Why should I, who have no need to work for food, spin?' may be the question asked. Because I am eating what does not belong to me. I am living on the spoliation of my countrymen. Trace the course of every pice that finds its way into your pocket, and you will realize the truth of what I write. Swaraj has no meaning for the millions if they do not know how to employ their enforced idleness. The attainment of this Swaraj is possible within a short time, and it is so possible only by the revival of the spinning wheel.

I do want growth, I do want self-determination, I do want freedom, but I want all these for the soul. I doubt if the steel age is an advance upon the flint age. I am indifferent. It is the evolution of the soul to which the intellect and all our faculties have to be devoted. I have no difficulty in imagining the possibility of a man armoured after the modern style making some lasting and new discovery for mankind; but I have less difficulty in imagining the possibility of a man having nothing but a bit of flint and a nail for lighting his path or his matchlock ever singing new hymns of praise and delivering to an aching world a message of peace and goodwill upon earth. A plea for the spinning wheel is a plea for recognizing the dignity of labour.

I claim that in losing the spinning wheel we lost our left lung. We are therefore suffering from galloping consumption. The restoration of the wheel arrests the progress of the fell disease. There are certain things which all must do in all climes. There are certain things which all must do in certain climes. The spinning wheel is the thing which all must turn in the Indian clime for the transition stage at any rate and the vast majority must for all time.

It was our love of foreign cloth that ousted the wheel from position of dignity. Therefore I consider it a sin to wear foreign cloth. I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and therefore sinful. Thus the economics that permit one country to prey upon another are immoral. It is sinful to buy and use articles made by sweated labour. It is sinful to eat American wheat and let my neighbour the grain-dealer starve for want of custom. Similarly it is sinful for me to wear the latest finery of Regent Street when I know that, if I had but worn the

things woven by the neighbouring spinners and weavers, that would have clothed me, and fed and clothed them. On the knowledge of my sin bursting upon me, I must consign the foreign garments to the flames and thus purify myself, and thenceforth rest content with the rough khadi made by my neighbours. On knowing that my neighbours may not, having given up the occupation, take kindly to the spinning wheel, I must take it up myself and thus make it popular.

I venture to suggest to the Poet that the clothes I ask him to burn must be and are his. If they had to his knowledge belonged to the poor or the ill-clad, he would long ago have restored to the poor what was theirs. In burning *my* foreign clothes I burn my shame. I must refuse to insult the naked by giving them clothes they do not need, instead of giving them work which they sorely need. I will not commit the sin of becoming their patron, but on learning that I had assisted in impoverishing them, I would give them a privileged position and give them neither crumbs nor cast off clothing but the best of my food and clothes, and associate myself with them in work.

Nor is the scheme of non-cooperation or Swadeshi an exclusive doctrine. My modesty has prevented me from declaring from the house-top that the message of non-cooperation, non-violence and Swadeshi is a message to the world. It must fall flat, if it does not bear fruit in the soil where it has been delivered. At the present moment India has nothing to share with the world save her degradation, pauperism and plagues. Is it her ancient shastras that we should send to the world? Well, they are printed in many editions, and an incredulous and idolatrous world refuses to look at them, because we the heirs and custodians do not live them. Before, therefore, I can think of sharing with the world, I must possess. Our

non-cooperation is neither with the English nor with the West. Our non-cooperation is with the system the English have established, with the material civilization and its attendant greed and exploitation of the weak. Our non-cooperation is a retirement within ourselves. Our non-cooperation is a refusal to co-operate with the English administrators on their own terms. We say to them, 'Come and co-operate with us on our terms, and it will be well for us, for you and the world.' We must refuse to be lifted off our feet. A drowning man cannot save others. In order to be fit to save others, we must try to save ourselves. Indian nationalism is not exclusive, nor aggressive, nor destructive. It is health-giving, religious, and therefore humanitarian. India must learn to live before she can aspire to die for humanity. The mice which helplessly find themselves between the cat's teeth acquire no merit from their enforced sacrifice.

True to his poetical instinct the Poet lives for the morrow and would have us do likewise. He presents to our admiring gaze the beautiful picture of the birds early in the morning singing hymns of praise as they soar into the sky. These birds had their day's food, and soared with rested wings in whose veins new blood had flown during the previous night. But I have had the pain of watching birds who for want of strength could not be coaxed even into a flutter of their wings. The human bird under the Indian sky gets up weaker than when he pretended to retire. For millions it is an eternal vigil or an eternal trance. It is an indescribably painful state which has to be experienced to be realized. I have found it impossible to soothe suffering patients with a song from Kabir. The hungry millions ask for one poem—invigorating food. They cannot be given it. They must earn it. And they can earn only by the sweat of their brow.

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।

* * *

यज्ञार्थात् कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसंगः समाचर ॥
सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥
देवान् भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥
इष्टान् भोगान् हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुंक्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥
यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥
अन्नाद् भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसंभवः ।
यज्ञाद् भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥
कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।
तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥
एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥

— गीता, अध्याय ३ *

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* Do thine allotted task!
Work is more excellent than idleness;

* * *

There is a task of holiness to do,
Unlike world-binding toil, which bindeth not
The faithful soul; such earthly duty do
Free from desire, and thou shalt well perform
Thy heavenly purpose. Spake Prajapati—
In the beginning, when all men were made,
And, with mankind, the sacrifice—"Do this!
Work! sacrifice! Increase and multiply
With sacrifice! This shall be Kamadhuk,
Your 'Cow of Plenty', giving back her milk
Of all abundance. Worship the gods thereby;

In these verses is contained for me the whole truth of the spinning wheel as an indispensable sacrament for the India of today. If we will take care of today, God will take care of the morrow.

Young India, 13-10-1921

The gods shall yield thee grace. Those meats ye crave
The gods will grant to Labour, when it pays
Tithes in the altar-flame. But if one eats
Fruits of the earth, rendering to kindly Heaven
No gift of toil, that thief steals from his world."
Who eat of food after their sacrifice
Are quit of fault, but they that spread a feast
All for themselves, eat sin and drink of sin.
By food the living live; food comes of rain,
And rain comes by the pious sacrifice,
And sacrifice is paid with tithes of toil:
Thus action is of Brahma, who is One,
The Only, All-pervading; at all times
Present in sacrifice. He that abstains
To help the rolling wheels of this great world,
Glutting his idle sense, lives a lost life,
Shameful and vain.

—*The Song Celestial : 3Ch.*

17

SOME QUESTIONS

Q. You say machinery has been the bane of civilization. Then why do you allow yourself to travel in railway trains and motor cars?

A. There are certain things which you cannot escape all at once, even whilst you are avoiding them. This earthy case in which I am locked up is the bane of my life, but I am obliged to put up with it and even indulge it as this friend knows. But does he seriously doubt that the machine age was responsible for the organized murders during the late war? Asphyxiating gas and such other abominations have not advanced us by an inch.

Q. Is the economic law that man must buy in the best and the cheapest market wrong?

A. It is one of the most inhuman among the maxims laid down by modern economists. Nor do we always regulate human relations by any such sordid considerations. An Englishman pays more (and rightly) for the English collier in preference to cheap (say) Italian labour. Any attempt to introduce cheap labour into England will lead to a revolution. It would be sinful for me to dismiss a highly paid faithful servant because I can get a more efficient and cheaper servant although the latter may be equally faithful. The economics that disregard moral and sentimental considerations are like wax works that, being lifelike, still lack the life of the living flesh. At every crucial moment, these new-fangled economic laws have broken down in practice. And nations or individuals who accept them as guiding maxims must perish. There is something noble in the self-denial of the Mussalman who will pay more for food religiously prepared or a

Hindu who will decline to take food unless it is ceremonially clean. We lost when we began to buy our clothing in the cheap markets of England and Japan. We will live again, when we appreciate the religious necessity of buying our clothes prepared by our own neighbours in their cottages.

Q. Do you explain the beauty (spiritual or otherwise) of bonfires, when many people are going half-naked in the country and are shivering at the thought of the coming winter?

A. I do; for I know that their half-nakedness is due to our criminal neglect of the fundamental law of life in India that she should wear only hand-spun just as she must eat only home-cooked food. My giving my discarded foreign clothes to them will only prolong the agony. But if the warmth generated by the bonfires are kept up till the last piece is burnt, the warmth will last for ever, and each successive winter will see the nation more and more invigorated.

Young India, 27-10-1921

18

CO-OPERATION

Probably very few workers have noticed that progress of hand-spinning means the greatest voluntary co-operation the world has ever seen. It means co-operation among millions of human beings scattered over a very wide area and working for their daily bread. No doubt agriculture has required much co-operative effort, but hand-spinning requires still greater and more honest co-operation. Wheat grows more by nature's honesty than by man's. Manufacture of yarn in our cottages is dependent solely on human honesty. Hand-spinning is impossible without the willing and intelligent co-operation of millions of human beings. We have to arrive at a stage when the spinner like the grain-seller is assured of a steady market for his yarn as well as the supply of cotton slivers, if he or she does not know the process of carding. Is it any wonder if I claim that hand-spinning can drive away, as if by magic, the growing pauperism of the masses? An English friend sends me a newspaper cutting showing the progress of machinery in China. He has evidently imagined that in advocating hand-spinning I am propagating my ideas about machinery. I am doing nothing of the kind. I would favour the use of the most elaborate machinery, if thereby India's pauperism and resulting idleness be avoided. have suggested hand-spinning as the only ready means of driving away penury and making famine of work and wealth impossible. The spinning wheel itself is a piece of valuable machinery, and in my own humble way I have tried to secure improvements in it in keeping with the special conditions of India. The only question, therefore, that a lover of India and humanity has to address

himself to is how best to devise practical means of alleviating India's wretchedness and misery. No scheme of irrigation or other agricultural improvement that human ingenuity can conceive can deal with the vastly scattered population of India or provide work for masses of mankind who are constantly thrown out of employment. Imagine a nation working only five hours per day on an average, and this not by choice but by force of circumstances, and you have a realistic picture of India.

If the reader would visualize the picture, he must dismiss from his mind the busy fuss of the city life or the grinding fatigue of the factory life or the slavery of the plantation. These are but drops in the ocean of Indian humanity. If he would visualize the picture of the Indian skeleton, he must think of the eighty per cent of the population which is working its own fields, and which has practically no occupation for at least four months in the year, and which therefore lives on the borderland of starvation. This is the normal condition. The ever recurring famines make a large addition to this enforced idleness. What is the work that these men and women can easily do in their own cottages so as to supplement their very slender resources? Does anyone still doubt that it is only hand-spinning and nothing else? And I repeat that this can be made universal in a few months' time, if only the workers will. Indeed it is on a fair way to becoming universal. Experts only are needed to organize it. People are ready, and what is most in favour of hand-spinning is that it is not a new and untried method but people have till recently been using it. Its successful reintroduction does need skilful endeavour, honesty, and co-operation on the largest scale known to the world. And if India can achieve this co-operation, who should deny that India has by that one act achieved Swaraj?

Young India, 3-11-1921

19
INDIAN ECONOMICS

A friend has placed in my hands a bulletin on Indian Piecegoods Trade prepared by Mr. A. C. Coubrough C. B. E. by order of the Government of India. It contains the following prefatory note: 'The Government of India desire it to be understood that the statements made and the views expressed in this bulletin are those of the author himself.' If so, why has the Government of India burdened the tax-payer with the expense of such bulletins? The one before me is 16th in the series. Do they publish both the sides of the question?

The bulletin under review is intended to be an answer to the Swadeshi movement. It is an elaborate note containing a number of charts showing the condition of imports and home manufacture of piecegoods including hand-woven. But it does not assist the reader in studying the movement. The painstaking author has bestowed no pains upon a study of the present movement or its scope. That the Government of India treats the greatest constructive and co-operative movement in the country with supreme contempt and devotes people's money to a vain refutation instead of a sympathetic study and treatment, is perhaps the best condemnation that can be pronounced upon the system under which it is carried.

The author's argument is:

1. The movement, if successful, will act not as a protective but a prohibitive tariff.

2. This must result in merely enriching the Indian capitalist and punishing the consumer.

3. The imports are non-competitive in that the bulk of the kind of piecegoods imported are not manufactured in India.

4. The result of boycotting such piecegoods must be high prices without corresponding benefit.

5. The boycott, therefore, being against the law of supply and demand and against the consumer, must fail in the end.

6. The destruction of hand-spinning, which I have deplored, is due to natural causes, viz. the invention of time-saving appliances, and was therefore inevitable.

7. The Indian farmer is responsible for his own ruin in that he has indolently neglected cotton culture which was once so good.

8. The best service I can render is, therefore, to induce the agriculturist to improve the quality of cotton.

9. The author concludes, 'If instead of filling homes with useless charkhas he were to start a propaganda for the more intensive cultivation of cotton and particularly for the production of longer staple cotton, his influence would be felt not only at the present day but for many generations to come.'

The reader will thus see that what I regard as the supreme necessity for the economical salvation of India the author considers to be rank folly. There is, therefore, no meeting ground here. And, in spite of the prefatory note of the Government of India reproduced by me, the author does represent the Government attitude. I have invited them and the co-operators definitely to make common cause with the people in this movement at any rate. They may not mind its political implications because they do not believe in them. And surely they need not feel sorry if, contrary to their expectation, the rise of the charkha results in an increase in the political power of the people. Instead of waging war against khadi, they might have popularized its use and disarmed the terrible suspicion they labour under of wishing to benefit the foreign manufacturer at the expense of the Indian cultivator. My invitation is open for all time. I pro-

phesy that, whatever happens to the other parts of the national programme, Swadeshi in its present shape will abide for ever, and must if India's pauperism is to be banished.

Even though I am a layman, I make bold to say that the so-called laws laid down in books on economics are not immutable like the laws of Medes and Persians, nor are they universal. The economics of England are different from those of Germany. Germany enriched herself by bounty-fed beet sugar. England enriched herself by exploiting foreign markets. What was possible for a compact area is not possible for an area 1900 miles long and 1500 broad. The economics of a nation are determined by its climatic, geological and temperamental conditions. The Indian conditions are different from the English in all these essentials. What is meat for England is in many cases poison for India. Beef tea in the English climate may be good, it is poison for the hot climate of religious India. Fiery whisky in the north of the British Isles may be a necessity, it renders an Indian unfit for work or society. Fur coats in Scotland are indispensable, they will be an intolerable burden in India. Free trade for a country which has become industrial, whose population can and does live in cities, whose people do not mind preying upon other nations and therefore sustain the biggest navy to protect their unnatural commerce, may be economically sound (though, as the reader perceives, I question its morality). Free trade for India has proved her curse and held her in bondage.

And now for Mr. Coubrough's propositions.

1. The movement is intended to serve the purpose of a voluntary prohibitive tariff.

2. But it is so conceived as neither unduly to benefit the capitalist nor injure the consumer. During the very brief transition stage the prices of home manufactures may be, as they are, inflated. But the rise can only be temporary, as the vast majority of

consumers must become their own manufacturers. This cottage manufacture of yarn and cloth cannot be expensive even as domestic cookery is not expensive and cannot be replaced by hotel cookery. Over twentyfive crores of the population will be doing their own hand-spinning and having yarn thus manufactured woven in neighbouring localities. This population is rooted to the soil, and has at least four months in the year to remain idle.

If they spin during those hours and have the yarn woven and wear it, no mill-made cloth can compete with their khadi. The cloth thus manufactured will be the cheapest possible for them. If the rest of the population did not take part in the process, it could easily be supplied out of the surplus manufactured by the twentyfive crores.

3. It is true that non-competitive imports are larger than those that compete with the manufactures of Indian mills. In the scheme proposed by me the question does not arise, because the central idea is not so much to carry on a commercial war against foreign countries as to utilize the idle hours of the nation and thus by natural processes to help it to get rid of her growing pauperism.

4. I have already shown that the result of boycott cannot in the end be a rise in the price of cloth.

5. The proposed boycott is not against the law of supply and demand, because it does away with the law by manufacturing enough for the supply. The movement does require a change of taste on the part of those who have adopted finer variety and who patronize fantastic combinations of colours and designs.

6. I have shown in these pages that the destruction of hand-spinning was designed and carried out in a most inhuman manner by the agents of the East India Company. No amount of appliances would ever have displaced this national art and industry but for this

artificial and systematically cruel manner of carrying out the destruction.

7. I am unable to hold the Indian farmer responsible for the deterioration in cotton culture. The whole incentive was taken away when hand-spinning was destroyed. The State never cared for the cultivator.

8. My activity, I am proud to think, has already turned the cultivator's attention to the improvement of cotton. The artistic sense of the nation will insist on fine counts for which long staple is a necessity. Cotton culture by itself cannot solve the problem of India's poverty. For it will still leave the question of enforced idleness untouched.

9. I therefore claim for the charkha the honour of being able to solve the problem of economic distress in a most natural, simple, inexpensive and business-like manner. The charkha, therefore, is not only not useless as the writer ignorantly suggests, but it is a useful and indispensable article for every home. It is the symbol of the nation's prosperity and therefore freedom. It is a symbol not of commercial war but of commercial peace. It bears not a message of ill-will towards the nations of the earth but of good will and self-help. It will not need the protection of a navy threatening a world's peace and exploiting its resources, but it needs the religious determination of millions to spin their yarn in their own homes as today they cook their food in their own homes. I may deserve the curses of posterity for many mistakes of omission and commission, but I am confident of earning its blessings for suggesting a revival of the charkha. I stake my all on it. For every revolution of the wheel spins peace, goodwill and love. And with all that, inasmuch as the loss of it brought about India's slavery, its voluntary revival with all its implications must mean India's freedom.

Young India, 8-12-1921

20

MILL CLOTH

If hand-spun and hand-woven khadi, whether cotton, wool or silk, is to be the order of the day, what is the place of mill cloth in the national economy, is the question often asked. If millions of villagers could receive, understand and take up the message of the spinning wheel today, I know that there is no room for mill cloth, whether foreign or Indian, in our domestic economy, and that the nation will be all the better for its entire disappearance.

This statement has nothing to do with machinery or with the propaganda for boycott of foreign cloth. It is purely and simply a question of the economic conditions of the Indian masses.

But unless Providence comes to the rescue and miraculously and immediately drives the masses to the spinning wheel as to a haven of refuge, the Indian mills must continue to supplement the khadi manufacture for a few years to come at any rate. It is devoutly to be wished that a successful appeal could be made to the great mill-owners to regard the mill industry as a national trust and that they should realize its proper place. The mill-owners cannot wish to make money at the expense of the masses. They should on the contrary model their business in keeping with the national requirements and wipe out the reproach that was justly levelled against them during the Bengal Partition agitation. Even now complaints continue to come from Calcutta and elsewhere that Indian mills are charging for their dhotis more than Manchester although their dhotis are inferior to the Manchester ones. If the information is correct, it is highly unpatriotic, and such a policy of grab is likely to damage both the cause and the country. At the moment

when the country is going through the travail of a new birth, surely it is wicked to charge inordinate prices and thus not merely to stand aloof from the popular movement but actually to be callously indifferent to it.

The mill-owners might also, if they will, take a larger view of the situation, understand, appreciate and foster the khadi movement and study the wants of the people and suit their manufactures to the new needs of the country.

But whether they do or not, the country's march to freedom cannot be made to depend upon any corporation or groups of men. This is a mass manifestation. The masses are moving rapidly towards deliverance, and they must move whether with the aid of the organized capital or without. This must, therefore, be a movement independent of capital and yet not antagonistic to it. Only if capital came to the aid of the masses, it would redound to the credit of the capitalists and hasten the advent of the happy day.

Nor was it otherwise before. India's history is not one of strained relations between capital and labour. The conception of four divisions is as religious as it is economic and political. And the condition has not been affected for the worse by the admixture of Islamic culture which is essentially religious and therefore beneficial to the poor. Islam seems to forbid the hoarding of capital as it literally forbids usury.

And even at the present moment it is not possible to say that capital is standing out. It was the modest capitalist who subscribed so liberally to the Tilak Swaraj Fund. But it has to be admitted with pain that the bulk of the mill-owners unfortunately stood out. Manufacture of piecegoods is the largest industry in the country. It is time for it to make its choice. Will it make it or will it drift?

Young India, 23-2-1922

21

THE SPINNING WHEEL

[On February 15, 1922, Gandhiji wrote a letter to Sir Daniel Hamilton from Bardoli about the spinning wheel. We reproduce below the letter with Sir Daniel's reply. ED.]

I

Dear Sir,

Mr. Hodge writes to me to say that you would like to have an hour's chat with me, and he has suggested that I should open the ground which I gladly do. I will not take up your time by trying to interest you in any other activity of mine except the spinning wheel. Of all my outward activities I do believe that the spinning wheel is the most permanent and the most beneficial. I have abundant proof now to support my statement that the spinning wheel will solve the problem of the economic distress in millions of India's homes, and it constitutes an effective insurance against famines.

You know the great scientist Dr. P. C. Ray, but you may not know that he has also become an enthusiast on behalf of the spinning wheel. India does not need to be industrialized in the modern sense of the term. It has 750,000 villages scattered over a vast area 1,900 miles long, 1,500 broad. The people are rooted to the soil, and the vast majority are living a hand-to-mouth life. Whatever may be said to the contrary, having travelled throughout the length and breadth of the land with eyes open and having mixed

with millions, there can be no doubt that pauperism is growing. There is no doubt also that the millions are living in enforced idleness for at least four months in the year. Agriculture does not need revolutionary changes. The Indian peasant requires a supplementary industry. The most natural is the introduction of the spinning wheel, not the hand-loom. The latter cannot be introduced in every home, whereas the former can, and it used to be so even a century ago. It was driven out not by economic pressure but by force deliberately used, as can be proved from authentic records. The restoration, therefore, of the spinning wheel solves the economic problem of India at a stroke. I know that you are a lover of India, that you are deeply interested in the economic and moral uplift of my country. I know too that you have great influence. I would like to enlist it on behalf of the spinning wheel. It is the most effective force for introducing successful co-operative societies. Without the co-operation of the millions the enterprise can never be successful, and as it is already proving a means of weaning thousands of women from a life of shame, it is as moral an instrument as it is economic.

I hope you will not allow yourself to be prejudiced by anything you might have heard about my strange views about machinery. I have nothing to say against the development of any other industry in India by means of machinery, but I do say that to supply India with cloth manufactured either outside or inside through gigantic mills is an economic blunder of the first magnitude, just as it would be to supply cheap bread through huge bakeries established in the chief centres in India and to destroy the family stove.

Yours faithfully,
M. K. GANDHI

II

Warren Hill,
Loughton,
Essex, 8th March 1922

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am indebted to our mutual friend Mr. Hodge for your letter of 15th February which has just reached me, and which I am very glad to receive. As, however, I am just recovering from a serious operation and am still confined to my room, I hope you will be good enough to excuse me, if I do not reply at any length to your letter by today's mail. I shall hope to do so later.

Meantime, with reference to your remarks regarding the charkha, I may say from my own personal knowledge of Indian rural life that, given a fair chance, with the help of modern finance, not only the spinning wheel but the hand-loom can compete successfully with steam power, the reason being that the four months' labour which is now largely wasted in the agricultural off-season costs nothing. No yarn or cloth can be cheaper than that which costs only the price of the raw material.

I quite agree with your opinion regarding the evils of the huge factory system. The value of an industry should be gauged less by the dividends it pays to sleeping shareholders than by its effects on the bodies, souls and spirits of the people employed in it. Cloth is dear which saves a few annas to the buyer, while it cheapens the lives of the men, women and children who live in the Bombay chawls.

What I want to see grow up in India, and I think it is what you want also, is a Swaraj whose power will be measured in terms of healthy life rather than in terms of unhealthy money. 320 millions of people who were masters of the money power instead of its servants, would be the greatest nation on earth.

This Swaraj can be reached in a few years, and the way to it lies through expanding fields of rice and wheat, not through the Sahara of revolution. But finance is a big subject which I cannot tackle today, though I may do so shortly.

Meantime, I hope you will not be too hard on the Government. I myself have criticized Government about as severely as anyone, and I hope to do so again, for I strongly disapprove of this doubling of the salt tax, and increased postage; but after all is said and done, it is the Government which has welded India into one, and made it possible to be one nation. I should like to think of you not as the destroying angel of the old regime, but as the master builder of the new. I have no axe to grind, and if I can help in any way to build the New India, it will be my delight to do so.

With kindest regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,
D. M. HAMILTON

Young India, 6-4-1922

22
FREE TRADE v. PROTECTION

Apropos of the contemplated protection for Tata Steel Works, I have been asked to state my own views on protection. Of what use they can possibly be, at the present moment, I do not know: nor do I know the merits of the proposal regarding the Steel Works. But I take the opportunity of dispelling the illusion that I am inimical to capital, and that I would destroy machinery and their products if I had the power. The fact is that I am a confirmed protectionist. Free trade may be good for England which dumps down her manufactures among helpless people and wishes her wants to be supplied from outside at the cheapest rate. But free trade has ruined India's peasantry in that it has all but destroyed her cottage industry. Moreover no new trade can compete with foreign trade without protection. Natal nursed her sugar industry by both bounty and import duty. Germany developed beet sugar by a system of bounties. I would any day welcome protection for mill industry, although I give and would always give preference to hand-spun khadi. Indeed I would give protection to all useful industries. Much of my opposition to the Government would abate, if I found that it was truly solicitous for India's economic and moral welfare. Let the Government protect the cloth industry to the point of prohibition of all foreign cloth; let it popularize the charkha by making all its purchases of cloth in khadi; let it abolish without regard to revenue the drink and the drugg traffic, and cut down the army expenditure to the extent of the loss of that revenue. When such a happy event takes place, my opposition will lose its point. It will pave the way for a real discussion of Reforms. To me the two steps will be a striking sign of change of heart which must precede any honourable settlement.

Young India, 15-5-1924

23

EMPIRE GOODS BOYCOTT

It is curious how the question of the Empire goods boycott continues to challenge public attention from time to time. From the standpoint of non-violent non-cooperation it seems to me to be wholly indefensible. It is retaliation pure and simple and as such punitive. So long, therefore, as the Congress holds to *non-violent* non-cooperation, so long must boycott of British, as distinguished from other foreign, goods be ruled out. And if I am the only Congressman holding the view, I must move a resolution at the next Congress repealing the resolution in the matter carried at the last special session.

But for the moment I propose to discuss not the ethics but the utility of the retaliatory boycott. The knowledge that even the Liberals joined the boycott campaign cannot make one shrink from the inquiry. On the contrary, if they come to believe with me that the retaliatory boycott that they and the Congress took up was not only ineffective but was one more demonstration of our impotent rage and waste of precious energy, I would appeal to them to take up with zeal and determination the boycott of *all* foreign cloth and replacing the same not with Indian mill cloth but with hand-spun khadi.

I have had the pleasure of reading the report of the Boycott Committee. It must be, has remained, the last word on the utmost that can be done in the shape of boycott of British or Empire goods. The report, in my opinion, presents a formidable case, not for but against such boycott. It frankly states that the bulk of the Empire goods, such for instance as railway material, is imported by the Government or

English firms; that the trifles such as scents, soaps, boots imported are mostly consumed by those easy-going, luxury-loving Indians who are never likely to take to the boycott. It will be found on a calm consideration of the figures that, even if the boycott of the trifles was scrupulously carried out by every Congressman and every Liberal, the amount would not be at the outside more than one crore of rupees per year. He must be a brave optimist who could believe that the Kenya Englishmen or Englishmen in general would be made to change their policy by reason of such boycott.

'But,' says the critic, 'see what a flutter was created in cheapside when the Empire goods boycott resolution of the Bombay Municipal Corporation was cabled free of charge by Reuter.' Surely we know enough of the British trade methods not to be unduly elated by such flutters. They are often put on in order to inflame the gullible public against 'the unscrupulous Indian agitators who are bent upon injuring England.' When the excitement is not put on, it is a symptom of the British mercantile sensitiveness to every commercial fluctuation or movement. It is by such sensitiveness that it ever remains prepared for emergencies of every conceivable type. I would ask the public, therefore, never to rely upon the excitements or approbations from England, or for that matter from any foreign State. Their fear or praise of our action can never secure us in our position, if our action which is either feared or praised is not, in itself, substantially effective.

If our rage did not blind us, we should be ashamed of the boycott resolution when we realized that we depended upon British goods for some of our national requirements. When we may not do without English books and English medicines, should we boycott English watches because we can procure Geneva watches?

And if we will not do without English books because we need them, how shall we expect the importer of British watches or perfumes to sacrifice his trade? My very English efficient nurse, whom I loved to call 'tyrant' because she insisted in all loving ways on my taking more food and more sleep than I did, with a smile curling round her lips and insidious twinkle in her eyes, gently remarked, after I was safely removed to a private ward escorted by the house-surgeon and herself: 'As I was shading you with my umbrella I could not help smiling that you, a fierce boycotter of everything British, probably owed your life to the skill of a British surgeon handling British surgical instruments administering British drugs, and to the ministrations of a British nurse. Do you know that, as we brought you here, the umbrella that shaded you was of British make?' The gentle nurse, as she finished the last triumphant sentence, evidently expected my complete collapse under her loving sermon. But happily I was able to confound her self-assurance by saying: 'When will you people begin to know things as they are? Do you know that I do not boycott anything merely because it is British? I simply boycott all foreign cloth because the dumping down of foreign cloth in India has reduced millions of my people to pauperism.' I was even able to interest her in the khadi movement. Probably she became a convert to it. Anyway she understood the propriety, the necessity and the utility of khadi; but she could only laugh (and rightly) against the wholly ineffective and meaningless boycott of British goods.

If the champions of this retaliatory boycott will look at their homes and their own belongings, they will, I have no doubt, discover the ludicrousness of their position, even as my nurse friend did under the supposition that I belonged to that boycott school.

I yield to no one in my desire to see justice done to our countrymen in Kenya or to win Swaraj at the

earliest possible moment. But I know that angry impatience can only frustrate the very end we have in view. What is it then in which all parties — Liberals, pro-Councilwallas, No-changers and others — can successfully combine to enable us to achieve our end? I have already given the answer. But I must examine it fully in the next issue and show why it furnishes the only feasible solution.

Young India, 15-5-1924

24

BOYCOTT FOREIGN CLOTH

Last week I endeavoured to show the futility of the boycott of Empire goods campaign. I submit that it is even harmful in that it distracts the country's attention from the only effective and indispensable boycott. I have admitted more than once that, if we eliminate non-violence from our consideration, those who do not believe with me that non-violence in politics is the only remedy for achieving our goal, and are satisfied that non-violent methods have failed, are not only justified in applying other remedies, if they find them more effective, but are bound to do so. My point, however, is that boycott of Empire goods is not at all feasible so long as the present system is in existence. So far as I can see, the only alternative to non-violence and all it implies is an armed rebellion. If we wish to make preparations for it, boycott of Empire goods has not only a legitimate but it has a necessary place in the national programme. Its retention and a fierce propaganda in its favour must increasingly heat our blood as we realize our impotence. The natural consequence of such propaganda must, therefore, result in indisciplined violence all round. It would not then matter that it is crushed. It will still be considered a training in armed rebellion. Each crushing will certainly bring demoralization among many but will bring increased determination among a few. And out of that small determined band may arise an army of soldiers such even as William the Silent surrounded himself with. If the national workers have come to the conclusion that India cannot write new history but must do as the European countries have done, I would understand and appreciate their

campaign of boycott of Empire goods. Even though it may never succeed, it must be kept up as an ideal because it would be regarded as one of the factories for generating the necessary steam. India has a right to adopt the time-worn method, if she chooses to, and no power on earth can deprive her of that right.

But I venture to say with confidence that the way of the sword is not open to India. I dare to prophesy that, if India chooses that way, she must be prepared —

1. either to submit to foreign rule for generations to come;

2. or to submit to exclusively Hindu or exclusively Mussalman rule almost in perpetuity.

I know that there are Hindus who, if they cannot have a purely Hindu India, are prepared to make the best terms with the Englishmen, and I know, too, that there are Mussalmans who, till they are able to impose a purely Mussalman rule on India, are prepared to resign themselves to the English domination. To this minority I have no argument to address. They must continue to plough the sands. But I know that there is a very large majority that is impatient of foreign domination and is anxious to find an effective method of ridding India of it. I do not despair of convincing them that Swaraj in which Hindus, Mussalmans, and all others professing different creeds can participate on equal terms is attainable in a much shorter time than they can imagine possible if the thinking portion adopts means that are strictly non-violent, and of further convincing them that attainment of such Swaraj is impossible through any other means.

For the time being, however, I propose to assume that the Congress creed being what it is, Congressmen are precluded from creating an atmosphere predisposed to violence. Ineffective boycott of Empire goods must create such an atmosphere, and therefore

I go so far as to say that the boycott resolution was *ultra vires* of the Congress creed. But this point can only be decided by the Congress.

Let me therefore confine the reader's attention to the alternative boycott of foreign cloth. I suggest to the Liberals, Nationalists and Congressmen that, if they will all adopt the hand-spun khadi for their own personal use to the exclusion of all foreign or Indian mill cloth, and if they will themselves religiously spin for a definite period every day and persuade every member of their family to do likewise, and if they will to the extent of their ability introduce the wheel and the use of khadi among their neighbours, the nation can bring about the boycott of foreign cloth even in a year's time. Even as they may not on any pretext whatsoever use foreign cloth, they may not use cloth manufactured in our mills. I must distinguish between the two prohibitions. Boycott of foreign cloth is a vital necessity for all time. There is no question of a permanent national boycott of mill cloth. But Indian mills alone can never supply the present demand for cloth, whereas the charkha and the hand-loom can. But khadi, the product of the charkha, has yet to become popular and universal. It can only be so if the thinking portion of India will make the commencement. They must, therefore, restrict their use of cloth to khadi only. Our mills need no patronage from us. Their goods are popular enough. Moreover the nation has no control over the mills. They are not philanthropic institutions. They are frankly selfish. They have their own propaganda. If they recognize the signs of the times, they will help the foreign cloth boycott movement by cheapening their cloth and taking to areas not served at present by khadi. They can, if they will, avoid competition with khadi and be satisfied with supplementing it. Boycott of foreign cloth cannot be immediately accomplished unless every national worker religiously avoids the use of mill-

made cloth. Surely the proposition is too simple to need any argument. Khadi, which has to find a market, must command preference among enlightened men.

I have hitherto examined the use of khadi as the only effective and speedy means of bringing about a successful boycott of foreign cloth as distinguished from, and as an alternative to, that of Empire goods. But when to this potency of khadi is added its power to feed the starving millions, the case becomes irresistible.

It is perhaps now easy to understand why a charkha atmosphere has to be created and why every man, woman and child who understands the necessity of the charkha for the national well-being must religiously spin for some time every day. The peasantry of India is among the most industrious in the world as it is perhaps also the idlest. Both its industry and idleness are imposed upon it. It must work to make its fields yield their harvest. The East India Company by killing hand-spinning made it idle when it had no full labour to do. The peasantry will now return to charkha only when we set the example. Mere precept will produce little impression upon it. And when thousands spin for love, it is possible to give higher wages for spinning if we would keep the same price for khadi. I have myself been able to sell khadi manufactured at the Satyagrah Ashram cheaper because I had maunds of yarn lovingly thrown to me by the Punjabi sisters during my tour in the Punjab in 1919. It was possible for me, if I had liked, to pay higher wages to professional spinners, and not reduce the price of khadi. I did not do so because at that early stage of the khadi movement I was paying so high a price as 4 annas for one lb. of yarn indifferently spun.

If the Liberals and the Congressmen stung by the Kenya decision hurled the ineffective boycott of

Empire goods at the heads of the white colonists of Kenya, why will they not in their cooler moments concentrate their effort upon the complete success of the khadi movement and thereby ensure the boycott of all foreign cloth? Need I prove that the boycott of foreign cloth will not only bring relief to the Kenya Indians but it will also bring Swaraj?

Young India, 22-5-1924

25

MACHINE SPINNING v. HAND SPINNING

A friend, who at one time swore by the spinning wheel, says in effect:

> "Your activity is useless. Why are you wasting your body and mind in dishing up old stuff in the pages of *Young India* and *Navajivan?* I can no longer read them with profit. I have found by experience that the spinning wheel is of no use. Do you know that the charkhas which people bought in the first wave of enthusiasm are rotting? They will not pay.
>
> I suggest turning your attention to something better. Substitute hand-spinning with machine-spinning. Erect a spinning mill in every taluka. Nationalize the profits. Only patriots should work the mills, not for gain, but for love of the country. Distribute the yarn to the local weavers only. The cloth woven should be confined to the respective talukas. You thus save waste of time and freight. To start with, organize one taluka in this manner and you will render great service."

As the argument is specious and comes from one who has in his own way tried the charkha, I propose to examine it for the sake of those who may hold the views that the friend does. The reader does not need to be told that the scheme is as old as the khadi movement. Like the proverbial bad penny it turns up again and again.

The friend has forgotten the central truth that the wheel furnished occupation and a small income to the millions who must have an additional income if they are not to starve. It is not possible to put up a hand-loom in every home. A loom in every village,

a charkha in every home is the formula. If a spinning mill is put up in every taluka, it will result in nationalizing the exploitation of the many by the few. All cannot be employed in a taluka mill. Moreover, we must import the machinery needed for over 2,000 talukas. And the experts for managing and working the mills will have to be trained. Mills cannot grow up like mushrooms, as charkhas can. The failure of a charkha is felt by nobody; the failure of a taluka mill will mean consternation among the people of the taluka concerned. In my opinion the proposition advanced by the friend is utterly unsound. I have, however, suggested that, if he has faith in his scheme, he should try it. I must continue to paddle my own canoe, because nothing else attracts me. The charkha for me has a charm all its own. I may be too dense to see its failure. I am not unwilling to be convinced of my error.

The same day that I received the friend's letter, I received another from another friend who says that he has ten years' experience of the mill industry. He has tested power-spinning and hand-weaving and is now engaged in the trade of hand-spinning and hand-weaving. He gives the palm to the last as a solution for the economic distress. I give this experience for what it is worth. The whole experiment is in too nebulous a state for giving a firm opinion on it. But this much is clear that the spinning wheel is today the only comforter in many a poor home to which no substitute can be taken. Of the spinning wheel it can be truly said as of no other:

> In this there is no waste of effort, there is no disappointment;
> Even a little of it saves one from great distress.

Young India, 26-6-1924

26

A PLEA FOR MILLS

A correspondent writes :

"According to you khaddar and the spinning wheel are the best means of winning Swaraj. It is impossible to dispute your noble intentions or self-sacrifice, but it is not understood why you fail to realize that by insisting on the wholesale adoption of khaddar you will be putting a large number of mill-owners and a considerably larger number of shareholders to terrible loss and distress, for, whereas the former have expended huge sums of money on mills, the latter—of whom there are very many of even below passable competence—have sunk their all in mill shares in the earnest hope of eking out a comfortable living with the decent dividends they would realize, having been emboldened by the prosperity of the mills. Thus, while you hope to bring prosperity to a very large number of lower orders who know no respectability and can in any way make both ends meet, you will doubtless be bringing ruin to an equally large or at least to a very considerable number of high and middle class men.

2. As a great mahatma imbued with the most disinterested and sympathetic feelings towards mankind at large, it behoves you to hold the scales even and to exercise your best intellect in striking a middle course so as on the one hand to encourage khaddar and the spinning wheel to a reasonable extent and on the other to help the mill-owners and the huge body of shareholders.

3. By all means boycott foreign cloth, but allow the optional use of mill cloth and khaddar. You

will thereby be helping many a high and middle class man."

This is a pathetic letter. I wish the correspondent's fears were realized. Then he will discover that the impending ruin of mills and shareholders of mills will be the time of their own and India's salvation. He will discover then that India will be pulsating with a new life and the middle class will be drawing their sustenance not as now from a starving peasantry but from prosperous farmers who would gladly exchange their produce for things they need but cannot themselves manufacture. A little reflection will enable the correspondent to realize that he and the rest of the shareholders as well as directors of mills will have to co-operate with the people before the spinning wheel is so well established as to oust the mills. Let the correspondent derive consolation from the fact that the spinning wheel has to displace nearly sixty crores worth of foreign cloth before it can touch the Indian mill cloth. But for reasons I have stated in these pages every one of us must simply think of khadi to the exclusion of even Indian mill cloth. Our mills need no patronage from me or anyone else. They have their own agencies and peculiar methods of advertising their wares. For those who are within the Congress beat to have the option of using mill-spun is to kill the khadi industry. Khadi needs all the protection that can be given to it before it can produce an impression upon the market.

So much for the consolation of the correspondent or those who think like him. May I, however, remind him that, if the letter were not written in ignorant fear of consequences to the mills and the middle class, it would be considered a heartless performance? What does the correspondent mean when he refers to 'lower orders who know no respectability and can in any way make both ends meet'? Is he sure that 'lower orders know no respectability'? Have they no feelings,

are they not injured by an angry word ? In what sense are they lower except in their poverty for which we the middle class are responsible ? And may I inform the correspondent that the 'lower orders' not only do not 'make the two ends meet' but the majority of them are living in a state of semi-starvation ? If the middle class people voluntarily suffer losses for the sake of the 'lower classes', it would be but tardy reparation for their participation in the latter's exploitation. It is this arrogation of superiority and consequent callousness to the sufferings of the so-called lower classes that keeps us from Swaraj and retards the progress of the life-giving charkha. I invite the correspondent to think in terms of the masses and by taking to the charkha identify himself with his less fortunate countrymen.

Lastly, let the correspondent remember that, if I may be advised on the ground of my broad humanity to be tender to our mills at the expense of the 'lower classes', I must also be urged, as I have been by other friends, to be tender to foreign mills for the same reasons. But if it is true, as it is true, that foreign mills have destroyed the prosperity of the masses, the consideration of humanity demands that the masses should be taught to revert to the charkha even though foreign mill-owners may suffer. Even so must indigenous mills suffer, if need be, for the sake of those on whose poverty their fortunes are built. If an enterprising baker puts up cheap bakeries in our villages so as to replace household kitchens, the whole nation, I hope, will rise against such an enterprise. The reason for the opposition would be the same as the reason for my opposition to the mills when they come in conflict with the interest of the masses.

Young India, 17-7-1924

27

FAULTY PRODUCTION?

A sober friend writes:

"In the last issue of *Young India* you have referred to over-production of khadi and to the necessity of organizing sales. You have also expressed a desire that cities like Bombay may take over surplus stock. But if there is lack of organization for sales, is not the system of production faulty? Khadi even today is much dearer than mill cloth, and it is doubtful if it lasts sufficiently long to balance its costliness. At present only those who are swayed by strong sentiment and who have spare money with them can indulge in the luxury of khadi. Your note suggests a sort of bounty. But what can bounty by itself achieve? It will fail in its object if the system of production is defective. If one rightly interprets your utterances, the charkha movement aims at making villages self-sufficient so far as cloth is concerned; that is to say, every cottage should spin for itself. But can it be said that the production is increasingly carried on in this direction? How many villages have become self-sufficient or are about to be so?

If, as you suggest, inter-provincial khadi trade is not desirable, equally it is undesirable to collect and stock khadi in towns for the simple reason that its comparative dearness makes its disposal uneconomical. Disposal is made possible by appeals to feelings which is not always the right way."

Khadi is only seemingly dear. I have pointed out in these pages that it is wrong to compare khadi with other cloth by comparing the prices of given lengths. The cheapness of khadi consists in the revolution of

one's taste. The wearing of khadi replaces the conventional idea of wearing clothes for ornament by that of wearing them for use. Opinion is divided as to the want of durability of khadi. Division of opinion is based probably on difference of experience. Different experience is inevitable so long as we have not arrived at uniformity in spinning. Four years' spasmodic effort is surely not enough to standardize the quality of hand-spun yarn. Every infant industry must struggle in the beginning. The sobriety of the friend disregards sentiment. But sentiment is a most powerful factor in the world. We cook our meals in our homes not because home-cooking is cheap according to the modern science of economy but because there is an age-long sentiment behind it. Even schoolboy economists could show that when you count the cost, labour, fuel, wear and tear of utensils and rent, hotel food is cheaper than home-cooked. It is necessary to provide bounty for khadi at the present moment. As Acharya Ray has very properly pointed out in his recent manifesto, what the State will not do must be done by the patriotic sentiment of the people. The object of the khadi movement is correctly stated by the writer. And that object can be fully achieved if we who desire to serve the masses realize the need of the spinning wheel and cultivate a taste for it and its products. If I throw the wheel at the skeletons of Orissa, they will not look at it. But if I begin spinning in their midst, they will take to it like fish to water. The masses do as the great ones do, not as they preach. Hence the necessity for the spinning resolution. It gives us a real sense of responsibility towards the villages, it fills the air with the spinning taste and cheapens khadi. If the spinning resolution is faithfully carried out by the country, it has a potency of which we have as yet no conception.

Young India, 7-8-1924

28

WASTE OF ENERGY?

A friend has invited my attention to an article in *The Welfare* of May last which is an examination by Shri M. N. Roy of Acharya Ray's address at the opening of the khaddar exhibition at Cocanada. The copy has been lying among my papers for fully two months. I am sorry that I have not been able to read the article before now. Having read it I feel that Shri Roy's refutation of Dr. Ray's contentions has been often refuted in these pages. But as readers have short memories, it is perhaps as well for me to restate the arguments in a connected form. Dr. Ray's critic considers that all the effort made on behalf of the charkha is 'a waste of energy'. The central point in Dr. Ray's argument is that the charkha has a message specially for the peasant in that it enables him to utilize his idle hours. The critic contends that the peasant has not any idle hours to utilize. What leisure he has he needs. If he is idle for four months, it is because he has overworked himself for eight months and that, if he is made to work the four months at the wheel, his efficiency for eight months' work will deteriorate from year to year. In other words, according to the critic, the nation has no leisure for the charkha.

It appears to me that the critic has little, if any, experience of the peasantry of India. Nor has he been able to picture to himself the way the charkha would work, and indeed is working today. The peasantry does not need to slave at the charkha. It affords a pleasant variety and recreation after hard toil. As a permanent institution, it is presented to the women of India. They will spin during odd moments. If the majority

of the toilers were to give on an average half an hour per day, they would spin enough yarn for themselves and to spare for the rest. Such a worker would add to his or her income at least Rs. 1-11-0 per year — not a bad addition to the income of a starving person. It is admitted that there are enough hand-looms and weavers today in India to weave all the cloth we may require. The only question is, therefore, that of hand-spinning. If the peasantry would take to it, the problem could be solved, without any great outlay of capital, of India becoming self-supporting for her cloth. This would mean at least sixty million rupees circulating among the millions of spinners and thousands of carders and weavers of India working in their own cottages and to that extent raising the earning capacity of the peasantry.

It is the experience all the world over that peasants need a subsidiary occupation to supplement their earnings or occupy their leisure hours. It must not be forgotten that not very long ago India's women spun during spare hours all the yarn it required. Revival of spinning has demonstrated the truth of the statement in a most striking manner. It is an error to suppose that the movement has failed. The workers have indeed partly failed. But wherever they have done their work well, it has continued. It is true that it has not yet acquired stability. This is because of incomplete organization and also because the spinners are not yet sure of being steadily employed. I invite Shri Roy to study the conditions in the Punjab, Karnatak, Andhra and parts of Tamil Nad, and he will find out for himself what possibilities spinning has.

India is a land of famines. Is it better that men and women should break stones, or that they should card and spin? Through chronic famine conditions the people of Orissa have been reduced to beggary. It is the most difficult thing now, even to make them

work. They are slowly dying out. Revival of spinning is their only hope.

Shri Roy lays stress upon improved agriculture. This is necessary. But spinning is not to replace the contemplated improvement. On the contrary it will herald it. This improvement has tremendous difficulties in its way. We have to surmount the unwillingness of the Government, the want of capital, and the obstinate refusal of the peasant to take to new methods. What is claimed for spinning is that

1. it supplies the readiest occupation to those who have leisure and are in want of a few coppers;
2. it is known to the thousands;
3. it is easily learnt;
4. it requires practically no outlay of capital;
5. the wheel can be easily and cheaply made. Most of us do not yet know that spinning can be done even with a piece of tile and splinter;
6. the people have no repugnance to it;
7. it affords immediate relief in times of famine and scarcity;
8. it alone can stop the drain of wealth which goes outside India in the purchase of foreign cloth;
9. it automatically distributes the millions thus saved among the deserving poor;
10. even the smallest success means so much immediate gain to the people;
11. it is the most potent instrument of securing co-operation among the people.

The difficulties in the way are want of faith among the middle classes which alone can supply the required number of workers. The greater difficulty still is the disinclination of the people to take to khadi in the place of the fine-looking mill-made cloth. The dearness of khadi during the transition stage is an additional difficulty. If the people respond to the spinning resolution in sufficient numbers, khadi can be made to compete with mill-made cloth.

There is no doubt that the movement does require for its success a little sacrifice on the part of the people. Even this direct sacrifice will not be necessary if we had our own Government mindful of the wants of the peasants and determined to protect them against foreign competition. Voluntary sacrifice for a time by the middle class can do what the Government would do if it was national.

There is no question of waste of energy. Have the thousands of our sisters, to whom Dr. Ray was previously giving doles of charity and is now giving honourable employment and making them partly or wholly self-supporting, wasted their energy? They have no other occupation save that of begging or starving. Is it waste of energy for young men to be going to the villages, studying their wants, feeling for them and helping them onward? Is it waste of energy for thousands of well-to-do young men and women to think of the poor half-fed millions and for their sake to set apart half an hour religiously to spinning on their behalf? If one man or woman spins for a few pice when he or she has no other occupation, it is so much gain; if one man or woman spins as a sacrifice, it is also so much gain. If there is one activity in which it is all gain and no loss, it is hand-spinning.

Young India, 21-8-1924

29

A BADGE OF SUBSERVIENCE

Every Indian publicist knows that when a duty was placed on cotton goods imported an excise cotton duty was placed on Indian production solely in the interest of Lancashire, and it still remains in spite of protests and in spite even of promises that it would be reconsidered. This duty is a continuing reminder to us of the subordination of India's interests to England's. Some friends who only know my strong, indeed passionate, preference for hand-spun to the exclusion of mill-spun cannot understand my advocacy of preference for Indian mill-spun. A little reflection must, however, show the consistency between the two policies. Foreign cloth must be totally banished from the Indian market, if India is to become an economically free nation, if her peasantry is to be freed from chronic pauperism, if that peasantry is to find honourable employment during times of famine and such other visitations. Protection of her staple industry is her birth-right. I would, therefore, protect the Indian mills against foreign competition even though for the time being it may result in mulcting the poor people. Such mulcting can take place only if the mill-owners are so unpatriotic as to raise prices owing to the monopoly they may secure. I have therefore no hesitation in advocating the repeal of cotton excise duties and imposition of a prohibitive import duty.

Similarly and consistently I would protect hand-spun khadi against the home mills. And I know that, if only foreign competition is avoided, khadi will be protected without difficulty. Foreign cloth will be banished when public opinion becomes effectively powerful. The same power will insure the

protection of khadi against mills. But my strong belief is that khadi will come to its own without any unseemly war with the mills. But, whilst khadi has only a limited number of votaries, they the votaries must necessarily preach khadi in preference to and to the exclusion of yarn and cloth manufactured even in our mills. To give the option is to kill khadi.

Young India, 28-8-1924

FOR FALLEN HUMANITY

It was at Barisal that I had the privilege of meeting our fallen sisters, victims of our lust, now nearly three years ago. Some of them said, 'We earn from two to three rupees per day. You must give us some occupation that would give us as much.' For a moment I sank within me but immediately came to myself and said, 'No, my dear sisters, I cannot suggest anything that would give you two or three rupees per day, but I must ask you to give up your calling even though you have to starve. There is the spinning wheel, however. If you take to it, it will be your salvation.'

The fallen sisters are only a small part of the fallen humanity of India. The skin and bone of Orissa are also in a sense part of that humanity. They are the victims of our ignorance as the first are of our lust. In their case it is not our animal lust but the lust for wealth that reduces them to skin and bone. They bleed so that we may become rich.

But now, thank God, we the educated middle class are hungering to identify ourselves with our fallen sisters and our starving brothers. We desire Swaraj so that they may live. We cannot all go to the villages and help the villagers. The fallen sister is a perpetual reminder to us to become pure. How then can we think of and feel for them from day to day? What may we all do for them every day? We are so weak that we want to do as little as possible. What is that little? I can think of nothing else but the spinning wheel. The work must be easy, capable of being done by all — the learned and the ignorant, the good and the bad, young and old, men and women, boys and girls, the strong and the weak, no matter to

what religion they belong. The work to be effective must be the same for all. The spinning wheel satisfies all these conditions. Therefore he or she who spins for half an hour every day serves the masses in the most efficient manner possible. And he renders whole-hearted conscious service to the fallen humanity of India and thus brings Swaraj nearer for that service.

The spinning wheel for us is the foundation for all public corporate life. It is impossible to build any permanent public life without it. It is the one visible link that indissolubly binds us to the lowest in the land and thus gives them a hope. We may or must add many things to it, but let us make sure of it even as a wise mason makes sure of his foundation before he begins to build the superstructure; and the bigger the structure the deeper and stronger the foundation. For the result to be obtained, therefore, spinning should become universal in India.

But spinning will be not only the connecting link between the masses and the classes, it will be the link between the different political parties. It will become common to all the parties. They may disagree on all other things if they like, but they can agree on this at the least.

I ask, therefore, everyone who loves the country, loves the poorest and the fallen, to give half an hour's labour daily to spinning even and well-twisted yarn for their sake and in the name of God. As this must be a gift to the nation, it must be delivered to the All India Khadi Board with religious regularity.

Young India, 4-9-1924

31

ABOUT MACHINERY

Ramachandran now turned to the next question: 'Are you against all machinery, Bapuji?'

'How can I be,' he answered, smiling at Ramachandran's naive question, 'when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery? The spinning wheel itself is a machine; a little toothpick is a machine. What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might.'

'Then, Bapuji,' said Ramachandran with eagerness, 'you are fighting not against machinery as such, but against its abuses which are so much in evidence today?'

'I would unhesitatingly say "Yes"; but I would add that scientific truths and discoveries should first of all cease to be the mere instruments of greed. Then labourers will not be overworked and machinery instead of becoming a hindrance will be a help. I am aiming, not at eradication of all machinery, but limitation.'

Ramachandran said, 'When logically argued out, that would seem to imply that all complicated power-driven machinery should go.'

'It might have to go,' admitted Gandhiji, 'but I must make one thing clear. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man. For instance, I would make intelligent exception. Take the case of the Singer Sewing Machine. It is one of the few useful things ever invented, and there is a romance about the device itself. Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sewing and seaming with her own hands, and simply out of his love for her he devised the sewing machine, in order to save her from unnecessary labour. He, however, saved not only her labour but also the labour of everyone who could purchase a sewing machine.'

'But, in that case,' said Ramachandran, 'there would have to be a factory for making these Singer Sewing Machines, and it would have to contain power-driven machinery of ordinary type.'

'Yes,' said Gandhiji, smiling at Ramachandran's eager opposition. 'But I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalized, or State-controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive. It is an alteration in the conditions of labour that I want. This mad rush for wealth must cease, and the labourer must be assured, not only of a living wage, but a daily task that is not a mere drudgery. The machine will, under these conditions, be as much a help to the man working it as to the State, or the man who owns it. The present mad rush will cease, and the labourer will work (as I have said) under attractive and ideal conditions. This is but one of the exceptions I have in mind. The sewing machine had love at its back. The individual is the one supreme consideration. The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian considerations, and not greed, the

motive. Thus, for instance, I would welcome any day a machine to straighten crooked spindles. Not that blacksmiths will cease to make spindles; they will continue to provide the spindles; but when the spindle gets wrong every spinner will have a machine of his own to get it straight. Therefore, replace greed by love and everything will come right.' *

Young India, 13-11-1924

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* From an article by M. D. entitled 'A Morning with Gandhiji'.

32
SPINNING FRANCHISE

Ramachandran's last question was about the much discussed 'spinning franchise'. Ramachandran assured Gandhiji, at the outset, that he was a spinner, but had to confess that he, with three friends at Santiniketan, only began spinning after they had heard of the fast. He also affirmed that he believed in universal spinning. But he could not understand how the Congress could compel its members to spin. 'Persuasion and not compulsion should be the method.'

'I see,' said Gandhiji, 'you go even farther than Mr. Andrews. He would not have the Congress to compel its members; but he would fain become a member of a voluntary spinning association, with rules about spinning. You object to any such association whatsoever?'

Ramachandran sat silent.

'Well then,' replied Gandhiji, enjoying the argument, 'I ask you, has the Congress any right to say that its members shall not drink? Will that be a restriction of the freedom of the individual too? If the Congress exercised that right of enjoining abstinence from drinking, there would be no objection. Why? Because the evils of drink are obvious. Well, I say that in India today, where millions are on the brink of starvation and plunged in utter misery, it is perhaps a much worse evil to import foreign cloth. Think of the starving millions of Orissa. When I went there, I saw the famine-stricken. Thanks to a kind Superintendent, who was in charge of an industrial home, I saw also their children, bright, healthy and merry, working away at their carpets, baskets, etc. There was no spinning, because these other things

were much in vogue at the time. But on their faces there was the lustre of joyful work. But when I came to the famine-stricken, what did I see? They were merely skin and bone, only waiting to die. They were then in that condition, because they would under no circumstances work. Even though you had threatened to shoot them if they refused to work, I am sure they would have preferred to be shot, rather than do any honest work. This aversion from work is a greater evil than drink itself. You can take some work out of a drunkard. A drunkard retains something of a heart. He has intelligence. These starved men, refusing to work, were like mere animals. Now how can we solve the problem of getting work out of people like these? I see no way except that of universalizing spinning. Every yard of foreign cloth brought into India is one bit of bread snatched out of the mouths of the starving poor. If you could visualize as I can the supreme need of the hour, which is to give India's starving millions a chance to earn their bread with joy and gladness, you would not object to the spinning franchise. I take the Congress to be a body of men and women who accept the paramount necessity of spinning. Why should it not ensure the integrity of membership in the body by making it compulsory for every member to spin? And you talk of persuasion! What can be better persuasion than that every member of the Congress spins regularly a certain quantity of yarn every month? How would it be honest for the Congress members to ask people to spin, when they do not spin themselves?'

Ramachandran replied with great earnestness, 'But how can you exclude people who do not spin from the Congress? They may be doing valuable service to the nation in other ways.'

'Why not?' asked Gandhiji. 'What is the reason for the property franchise? Why is it necessary for

a man to pay four annas to be a member? And why is age considered a necessary qualification? Would the eight year old violinist prodigy of Italy have the franchise? John Stuart Mill, however clever he may have been when he was seven years old, with his knowledge of Greek and Latin, had no franchise at that age. Why were these prodigies excluded? Some men will have to be excluded under any franchise. No, today many will not accept my position, but I have faith that the day will come—it may be after my death—when men will say that after all what Gandhi said was right.'*

Young India, 20-11-1924

* From an article by M. D. entitled 'A Morning with Gandhiji'.

33

THE SPINNING WHEEL

How is this service to be rendered? Here I give the first place to the spinning wheel. I have heard much against it. But I know the time is near when the very thing which is being abused today will be worshipped as Sudarshana Chakra. I am confident that, if we do not take it up voluntarily, the force of circumstances will compel us. The study of Indian economics is the study of the spinning wheel. It is the *sine qua non* for the revival of our languishing village industries. I look upon hand-spinning not as an occupation but as a duty incumbent upon followers of all religious sects and denominations.

An American writer says that the future lies with nations that believe in manual labour. Nations are tired of the worship of lifeless machines multiplied *ad infinitum*. We are destroying the matchless living machines, viz. our own bodies, by leaving them to rust and trying to substitute lifeless machinery for them. It is a law of God that the body must be fully worked and utilized. We dare not ignore it. The spinning wheel is the auspicious symbol of *sharir yajna* — body labour. He who eats his food without offering this sacrifice steals it. By giving up this sacrifice we became traitors to the country and banged the door in the face of the Goddess of Fortune. The numerous men and women in India whose bodies are mere skeletons bear witness to this. My revered friend Shri Sastriar says I am interfering even in the people's choice of their dress. This is perfectly true. It is the duty of every servant of the nation to do so whenever it becomes necessary. I would certainly raise my voice against it, if the nation takes, say, to

the pantaloon. It is wholly unsuited to our climate. It is the duty of every Indian to raise his voice against the nation using foreign cloth. The opposition really is not to the cloth being foreign but to the poverty which its importation brings in its train. If the nation gives up its jawar and bajri and imports oats from Scotland or rye from Russia, I would certainly intrude into the nation's kitchen, would scold to the full, and even sit *dharna* and make the agony of my soul heard. Such intrusions have even happened within recent times. During the late diabolical war in Europe people were compelled to raise particular crops, and the States controlled the food and drink of their subjects.

Those who wish to serve in the villages cannot but take up the study of the spinning wheel. Hundreds and even thousands of young men and women can earn their livelihood by its means and doubly repay the nation for it. This work means organization and familiarity with every villager to whom one could easily impart a rudimentary knowledge of economics and politics. The work might also include the true education of the village children and give one an insight into the many wants and shortcomings of villages.

Not only is there no conflict possible between a Prince and his subjects in this khadi work, on the other hand their relations might be expected to become cordial. The fulfilment of this expectation is conditional on the workers' humility. I am, therefore, neither ashamed nor do I hesitate in asking this political Conference to give prominence to the spinning wheel.*

Young India, 8-1-1925

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* From the presidential address delivered at the 3rd Kathiawad Political Conference held at Bhavnagar.

SWADESHI AND NATIONALISM

The following from a friend has been on my file for a long time:

> "No doubt you have read M. Romain Rolland's book entitled *Mahatma Gandhi.* On page 176 of this book appears this paragraph:
>
> 'What is this but the triumph of nationalism — the narrowest and most unpolluted? Stay at home, shut all doors, change nothing, hold on to everything. Export nothing, buy nothing, uplift and purify body and spirit. A gospel indeed of medieval monks! *And Gandhi of the broad mind lets his name be associated with it!* (By way of preface to D. B. Kalelkar's *Gospel of Swadeshi.*)'
>
> Coming from an ardent admirer of yours, this indeed calls for an answer from you. I notice in the November 27 issue of *Young India* you append a note at the foot of Mr. Andrews' article entitled 'Truth about Nationalism', which purports to state that Indian Swadeshi cannot become impure or racial. Will you not stretch the argument further in a subsequent issue and allay the fears of the author of this wonderful book and its innumerable readers?"

So far as D. B. Kalelkar's pamphlet is concerned, the position is this. It is a rendering of a Gujarati pamphlet. My preface was to the original. D. B. Kalelkar is a valued associate. I therefore wrote the half dozen lines of preface also in Gujarati without studying the pamphlet. I had only glanced at passages here and there. I knew my friend's views on Swadeshi. I had no difficulty about identifying myself with them. But at the instance of Mr. Andrews I have read the translation, and I confess that the presentment is

narrow in places. I have discussed them with Shri Kalelkar too, and he agrees that they do read narrow in the translation for which he is not responsible. So far as my own views are concerned, my writings in *Young India* make it quite plain that my Swadeshi, and for that matter Shri Kalelkar's, is not as narrow as the pamphlet would lead one to suppose.

So much for the pamphlet itself.

My definition of Swadeshi is well known. I must not serve my distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest. It is never vindictive or punitive. It is in no sense narrow, for I buy from every part of the world what is needed for my growth. I refuse to buy from anybody anything however nice or beautiful, if it interferes with my growth or injures those whom Nature has made my first care. I buy useful healthy literature from every part of the world. I buy surgical instruments from England, pins and pencils from Austria, and watches from Switzerland. But I will not buy an inch of the finest cotton fabric from England or Japan or any other part of the world, because it has injured and increasingly injures the millions of the inhabitants of India. I hold it to be sinful for me to refuse to buy the cloth spun and woven by the needy millions of India's paupers and to buy foreign cloth although it may be superior in quality to the Indian hand-spun. My Swadeshi, therefore, chiefly centres round the hand-spun khaddar and extends to everything that can be and is produced in India. My nationalism is as broad as my Swadeshi. I want India's rise so that the whole world may benefit. I do not want India to rise on the ruin of other nations. If, therefore, India was strong and able, India would send out to the world her treasures of art and health-giving spices, but would refuse to send out opium or intoxicating liquors although the traffic may bring much material benefit to India.

Young India, 12-3-1925

THE HAND-LOOM

The Director of Information (Bombay) has circulated a memorandum on hand-loom weaving done under the Department of Industries and Commerce. I publish below the salient extracts from the memorandum:

> "For some fifteen years past Government has been trying to secure the introduction of better and more economical methods and appliances in the hand-loom weaving, dyeing and calico printing industries.
>
> Hand-loom weaving is still a very important industry in this Presidency, for it supplies more than one-quarter of the total cloth required by the population of the Presidency, and during the past thirty years hand-looms have increased their output almost as fast as power looms.
>
> Under the control of the Department of Industries there were four weaving schools and seven weaving demonstrations in progress, and these were continued during last year. One of their functions is to help in the introduction of the fly-shuttle loom, which increases the output of the individual weaver by 40 per cent. In these schools instruction is given to boys in weaving cotton and mercerized bordered sarees, silk sarees, dhoties, shirtings, etc., of somewhat complicated and fancy designs which serve as good object-lessons to other weavers working in the vicinity of the schools. All these schools are equipped with khadi (i. e. pit) looms for beginners and saree looms for advanced pupils. It may be noted that, although last year was not a prosperous one for the mill industry, yet it was fairly favourable

to hand-loom workers who, at centres where silk and other fancy cloth was prepared, could earn from Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 a month, while on khadi (pit) and other cotton looms the wages did not amount to more than Rs. 35 a month.

The experiment of training agriculturists in hand-weaving as a spare time occupation was continued at Hoshali in the Dharwar District. Accommodation was provided for 8 agriculturists at a time in the school, and as a result six of the first batch took up hand-weaving seriously by purchasing fly-shuttle looms, and the others have announced their intention of doing so. At Hulkotti where the experiment was carried out in the previous year, two dozen fly-shuttle looms were introduced among the agriculturists.

The Weavers' Association of Dhulia petitioned to the Department to open a demonstration of automatic looms and allied appliances. This was done, but the weavers could not see their way to purchasing the machines which are somewhat expensive. A hand-sizing machine, however, was found to be so great an improvement on the existing methods that arrangements were made to produce copies of it locally. The Department is now demonstrating a number of machines at Sholapur, a large centre for hand-loom weaving, where hundreds of fly-shuttle hand-looms are found to work economically in competition with power mills. The hand-loom weaver can compete with the power mill worker so far as weaving operation is concerned, but his preparatory processes such as winding, twisting, doubling and sizing are slow and defective and form a considerable handicap.

An illustration of the usefulness of the demonstration work carried out by the Department of Industries is to be found at Bhiwandi in Thana District. In the year 1916 weaving schools were

> opened here and a number of fly-shuttle looms introduced amongst the weavers. A census and survey of hand-loom industry in this town taken last year show that out of a total number of 1,800 hand-looms nearly 1,500 were fitted with fly-shuttle slays. This illustrates how improved working methods continue to spread in a weaving locality even after the weaving school which introduced them on a small scale has been closed.
>
> Demonstrations of improved methods of dyeing met with success in Faizpur, Dhulia, Charni (Khandesh) and Malegaon."

May I point out to the Department that the attempt to introduce the hand-loom in the homes of agriculturists is foredoomed to failure? A little knowledge of the agricultural life will demonstrate the impracticability of such introduction. Hand-weaving is a long process requiring sustained labour and in itself demanding several processes at which more persons than one are required to work at one and the same time. This is not possible in a peasant's cottage. Hence from time immemorial hand-weaving has been a separate occupation and an independent and sole means of livelihood. A peasant requires an auxiliary occupation which he can take up or leave at will. Such an occupation for the millions is only hand-spinning. There are, no doubt, other such occupations for utilizing odd moments. But no other than hand-spinning will be found to serve millions of men and women. Hence, if the Department of Industries will justify its existence and will think in terms of the millions rather than of individuals and of India rather than of England, then it will devote its attention principally to hand-spinning, organize it among the villagers, and make improvements in the various methods of hand-spinning. I am glad to note here that the kindred Department in Bengal is turning its attention to hand-spinning though still in a perfunctory manner. This hand-

spinning is the one thing in which Government, if it at all means well, can co-operate with the people in making it a success. We have often been told to co-operate with the Government. The proper and natural thing, however, is for the Government to co-operate with the people, anticipate their wants and provide for them. I would also take the liberty of pointing out to the Department that, until they control all the processes cotton has to go through before it is brought to the loom, the latter will act merely as feeder to Manchester, Japan or even Bombay. Whereas the business of the Department is or should be to teach the villager to subject the produce of his field to all the processes in his own home or village so that he has a variety of occupation and so that he may not feel stranded and helpless when famine or flood overtakes him and leaves him without crops and without work.

Young India, 14-5-1925

36

A WORKER'S DIFFICULTY

Many suggestions are being handed to me during my Bengal tour. I appreciate them all even though I may not be able to adopt them. Here is one from a staunch worker:

> "The greatest difficulty is the high price of cotton prevailing here as also the absence of any arrangement for its ready and general supply. The result is that those who buy khaddar at the market have to pay almost double the price of mill-made cloth. Even a person who spins for himself all the yarn that may be required for a piece of cloth and gets it woven by a local weaver will find it in the long run that cloth made from his own yarn is not much cheaper than the mill-made stuff. The high price of cotton and, as its result, the high price of khaddar have stood as a stumbling block to the general adoption of khaddar in this province at least.
>
> The remedy of this state of things lies in the extensive cultivation of cotton in the country. But unfortunately this matter has not received the amount of attention which its importance deserves. Attempts are being made here and there to popularize spinning among the people, but no organized effort has yet been made to introduce or even to encourage the cultivation of cotton in Bengal.
>
> Hence I hope that during your tour in Bengal you will impress upon the people as well as the workers the supreme importance of growing indigenous cotton."

I am writing these notes on my silence day. Satish Babu of the Khadi Pratisthan is sitting by me.

I therefore handed the suggestion to him for reply, as he knows the Bengal conditions much better than I can ever hope to. Here is his reply:

"The writer thinks that the real difficulty about the spread of khadi in Bengal lies in the high price of cotton. The remedy suggested is to introduce and encourage the cultivation of cotton.

It is surely a difficulty in Bengal that cotton is not grown everywhere. But it is not the only difficulty or a serious difficulty. Manchester buys her cotton from America and Bombay and sends her mill products to India. Surely Bengal can get all the cotton she wants at any of the cotton marts of India. Lacs of rupees worth of cotton is grown in Bengal and sent away from the ports of Chittagong and Calcutta. Bengal does not utilize for home-spinning a fraction of the cotton she grows. She can use all her Chittagong and Comilla produce for home-spinning and buy what more she requires in the markets of Bihar and the United Provinces.

The real difficulty in the way of the spread of khadi is neither the high price nor the absence of cultivation of cotton. What is wanting for the spread of khadi is a desire to spin and use khadi and an organization to create and cater for the desire.

The Ashram from which the writer sends the note may be made a centre for selling 'cheap' cotton, i. e. cotton at fair market price. The Ashram might train up an expert in spinning and carding and then demonstrate to the sisters in the neighbourhood that with good slivers and a good charkha it is a pleasure to spin. It is only when spinning becomes irksome that imaginary difficulties about the spread of khadi crop up.

If the sisters of Bengal are helped from organizations where charkha experts are in a mood to serve, every difficulty will disappear, and I may

even see cultivators introducing cotton cultivation without much coaxing.

Spinning is the central process. There are processes before it and after it. Cotton cultivation, ginning and carding precede; spinning and weaving come after. We must confine our attention to efficient carding, spinning and weaving now. Serious effort made by determined men from efficient organizations will override all difficulties and make spinning a success in Bengal. I hope to see such a day in the near future."

Whilst I fully endorse the reply, I would add that the men require as much organizing for spinning as women. Without the men organizing it would be most difficult to get the women to respond. We need an army of voluntary spinners before we shall be able to organize women spinners for hire. It is only through husbands or fathers or brothers that we may hope to improve the wheel. The vast majority of workers are males. They are not able even to see the manner in which the women are working. But from the spinning exhibitions I visit I am able to imagine what is going behind the scene. The wheels, if they are properly looked after, can yield twice as much yarn as they are now doing. This means double earning with very little effort. Sometimes it is painful to see spinners working at rickety charkhas with heavy rods almost for spindles. If the wheels were made firm and the rods replaced with the right-size spindles, the output would immediately double itself.

As for cotton-growing, all the parts of Bengal are not fit for growing cotton. Importation to some extent will always be, therefore, necessary. Every new industry requires protection. State protection we may not get as yet. Voluntary protection is, therefore, the only remedy. It can be afforded by free spinning. That is one object of the Congress franchise. The second method is to beg cotton and, like Gujarat, sell

slivers or cotton at half price and getting the yarn woven also at half price for those who would spin enough for their wants. Comparison with the mills is a useless pastime. It is conceivable that Japan and Manchester may even practically give away their cloth to kill the reviving cottage industry of home-spinning. There must be, even then, people who will not have foreign or mill-made cloth even as a gift. It is they through whom we may expect to spread the charkha and make it a success.

Young India, 21-5-1925

37

SPINNING AND STUDENTS

One is tempted to summarize the talks with the students. But it is an impossible task. Everywhere they were fortunate in drawing Gandhiji into a long intimate chat. The Chittagong students heard from him how essential was spinning for Indian students, as naval training was essential for every English boy, and swimming and boating for every East Bengal boy. The Comilla students had a definition of national education from him. That education is national, said he, which educates in you a sense of fellow-feeling for all your countrymen, which teaches you to melt at the woes of your countrymen wherever they may be. That education is national which makes you think in terms of the nation, which makes you calculate not how a particular thing will benefit you individually, but what it means for the nation as a whole. And nothing was so universally useful as the spinning wheel. At Dacca the students' meeting was cancelled, but Gandhiji asked the students to come and have a chat after all the public functions were over, and they had more than they could even in their wildest dreams have expected. Gandhiji, always at his best when provoked, unbosomed himself when a friend objected that spinning was a waste of energy and time, and another that his advice took no count of the principle of division of labour. 'Do I ask you to do spinning for the whole of the day? Do I ask you to take it up as a substantive occupation? Where, then, is the breach of the principle of division of labour? Do you have a division of labour in eating and drinking?' he passionately asked. 'Just as every one of us must eat and drink and clothe himself, even so

every one of us must spin himself. And it is a waste, you say? Fellow-feeling for your countrymen, you say, you have in an abundant measure. And what is that fellow-feeling whithout the milk of human kindness? Do you feel anything like the love that a cow feels for her calf or a mother for her baby? The cow's udders and the mother's breast overflow with milk at the sight of their young ones. Do your hearts overflow with love at the sight of your famished countrymen? By spinning, my friends, you demonstrate your love for them. You spin and you make them shake off their idleness. A friend goes and beautifully sings before a crowd and affects their hearts. Is it a waste of effort? It would be, of course, if he vainly howls Bandemataram before them. But spinning means more. It has a purpose and it means added production. The purpose is that it serves as a bond with the masses. And the mechanical effort has something as its result, whilst there is absolutely nothing like it which all alike can do without much effort and skill, nothing which can be done by millions, by the best of us as by the mediocre. And the students should all do it particularly because they are the salt of the earth. Their life is yet to begin, they can imbibe new ideas as no one else can, and they have long years of service before them. You can put new wine into new bottles and not into old. And imagine what a disciplined band of students with fire, energy and reason can do. Imagine what a mighty thing it would be the product of a half-hour's labour given to spinning by every one of the 11,000 students of Dacca! And do you know that, if you all wear khadi, the spinners get a major part of the money you spend? You will perhaps think of England with her elaborate machinery. But she lives on the exploitation of other nations. She has conquered our labour. It is an economic drain which is even more disastrous than the Home Charges and other drains that Dadabhai Naoroji

opened our eyes to. Even he could not see this insidious drain, but I, being his disciple working along his lines, have discovered this subtle drain and say that the economic drain involved in our being made a nation of idlers is the most ruinous of all.' And so on and so forth, until he brought them face to face with the havoc this enforced idleness has wrought on the fair face of the land—the famishing of Jagannath Puri and the impoverished of Bihar, and the women in other parts to whom an anna per day is a coveted godsend. There is nothing which I have heard from him for many a long day which can exceed this talk in melting pathos and incisive appeal.*

Young India, 28-5-1925

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*From an article by M. D. entitled 'With Gandhiji in Bengal—III'.

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NOTES ON SPINNING

CART AND CHARKHA

During my tour in Bengal I meet with all kinds of ingenious arguments against the wheel from the ingenious Bengalis. Most of them have been examined in these pages. But as readers never remember what they read in journalistic literature, a journalist is always safe in repeating the same thing so long as perhaps he takes care to repeat at fair intervals. One of these friends asked me whether I propose to replace the railways with country carts, and if I did not, how I expected to replace mills with wheels. I told him that I did not propose to replace railways with carts because I could not do so even if I wished. Three hundred million carts could not destroy distance. But I could replace mills with wheels. For railways solved the question of speed. With mills it was a question of production in which the wheel could easily compete if there were enough hands to work as there were in India. I told him that as a matter of fact a villager could manufacture for himself sufficient cloth cheaper than mills if he did not count the value of his labour. And he did not need to do so as he would spin or even weave during his spare hours. It is remarkable how false or incomplete analogies deceive people. In the case in point, the difference between the mills and railways on the one hand and wheels and country carts on the other is so obvious that the comparison should never have been made. But probably the friend thought I was against all machinery in every conceivable circumstance. Probably he had in mind my objections to railways stated in my *Indian Home Rule*, though I have

repeatedly said that I am not working out the different fundamental problems raised in that booklet.

WASTE OF EFFORT?

Another argument advanced was that the spinning wheel was a waste of effort. It was an astounding argument advanced without any thought given to it. I showed that anything done with a purpose could not be regarded as waste of effort. The spinning wheel was presented to the nation for giving occupation to the millions who had, at least for four months in the year, nothing to do. I told the objector too that, seeing that the wheel produced at least 100 yards of yarn per every half hour, it could not be regarded as waste of effort. Moreover, it not only was not a waste of effort, but a sound economic proposition. For, what was required for the millions was a universal productive occupation which could be taken up during odd moments and which did not require any special talent or long course of training to learn. Such an occupation was only hand-spinning and no other.

FALLEN SISTERS SPINNING

At Noakhali I was told that two fallen sisters were not only spinning but they were entirely supporting themselves by spinning. Those were not young girls but women over forty who could no longer sell their shame but who would, but for spinning, have lived on begging. They were, therefore, strictly speaking, weaned from begging and not from their original trade. It is, however, a great thing for Noakhali to come in touch with these sisters and interest itself in their welfare. I was also told that some of them, though they had not given up their calling, had taken to spinning. I do not know it could be considered a gain for such sisters to spin if they would not give up their calling. It may well be used to cover their shame. At the same time there is no doubt that

spinning could not be recommended to them as a means of livelihood. They are used to earning so much as one to two rupees per day if not even more. They must have either weaving or even embroidery or other fancy work which would bring them a fair remuneration. It is, too, not a question that man can tackle. It must be reserved for the fair sex to rise to the occasion. Not until a woman of exceptional purity and strength of character rises and devotes herself to the task of redeeming this portion of fallen humanity will the problem of prostitution be tackled. No doubt man can do much among men who degrade themselves by enticing young women to sell themselves for their lust. Prostitution is as old as the world, but I wonder if it was ever a regular feature of town life that it is today. In any case time must come when humanity will rise against the curse and make prostitution a thing of the past, as it has got rid of many evil customs, however time-honoured they might have been.

SPINNING IN GOD'S NAME

Some young men of Bowringpet have sent me over 3,200 yards of yarn spun by them during seven days following the Ram Navmi. They describe the ceremony of repeating Ramnam during these seven days by all people, young and old. But these young men, besides taking part in that ceremony, spun simultaneously. It is an example worth copying. I know several young men who concentrate on God whilst they are spinning. Those who spin for sacrifice can surround the act with all that is noble and good. In Dacca some musicians called on the day of my silence to entertain me with sitar playing. Now Monday is not merely a day of silence but it is also a day of editing. I could ill afford, therefore, to listen to their music. But I did not want to disappoint them. I therefore wrote for them a message that I would spin whilst they played on the sitar. They readily

agreed. The result was that I spun better than usual. The hand was steadier for the music. I always use a noiseless charkha. It therefore did not interfere with my enjoyment of the music. On the contrary it enhanced the pleasure of listening to the music, and the music enhanced the pleasure of spinning. And neither interrupted my communion with God. The hand, the ear and the heart acted in perfect harmony. Let the sceptics test the experience for themselves.

Young India, 28-5-1925

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NOT MAN'S WORK?

Thus writes a professor:

"Personally I have full faith in the spinning wheel and khaddar. I fully understand that without khaddar there can be no common bond between the classes and the masses of India. And without a common bond, without feeling as one, no country can accomplish anything, much less India. Besides, I can very well understand that a success in sufficient production of khaddar is bound to result in excluding foreign cloth. The khaddar programme must be worked out to a success, if India is to achieve freedom.

But I am of opinion that you have begun at the wrong end. To ask able-bodied men to sit for spinning, like women, is what appears odd in the eyes of most of the people. I quite appreciate the reflection that we, at present, are no better than women. Still the reality is that we, all of us, cannot take up the work which has been associated in our country, for centuries, with women. Again, I would have consented to shake off this acquired notion, could I be persuaded to believe that at least the female population of the country have taken up the cause of spinning and that it still requires further support from the male population. To ask men to ply the spinning wheel while the female folk strut about in fine foreign saris is putting the cart before the horse. Besides, the question of foreign cloth in India is not so much of men's creation as of women's, and therefore, I think, to press the use of the spinning wheel and khaddar on men, instead of women, is to begin the solution at the wrong end.

> In my humble opinion, you should have left men alone, busy with their various sorts of political propaganda, and should have taken your message direct to the women of the land. Let your great programme of charkha and khaddar be confined to women for the present, and let men fight the battle of freedom with manlier weapons."

The letter was rather long. I have boiled down the argument without changing the language. It is evident that the learned professor does not know the condition of the women of India. Or he would have known that ordinarily men do not get the privilege or the opportunity of addressing women. It has been my good fortune, no doubt, to be able to do so to a certain extent. But, in spite of all the facilities given to me, I have not been able to reach them to the extent I have reached men. He should also know that the women cannot act without the consent of men. I can quote several instances where men have prevented women from adopting the charkha or khaddar. Thirdly, women cannot make the inventions and the changes that men can make. Had the movement of spinning been confined only to women, it would have been impossible to make the improvements that the charkha has undergone during the past four years or to organize spinning in the manner it has been. Fourthly, it is contrary to experience to say that any vocation is exclusively reserved for one sex only. Cooking is predominently the occupation of women. But a soldier would be worthless who cannot cook his own food. The whole of the cooking in camps is necessarily and naturally done by men. Moreover, whilst women naturally cook for the household, organized cooking on a large scale is universally done by men throughout the world. Fighting is predominently men's occupation, but Arab women fought like heroines side by side with their husbands in the early struggles of Islam. The Rani of Jhansi

distinguished herself for her bravery as very few men did during the Sepoy Revolt. And today in Europe we find women shining as lawyers, doctors and administrators. The clerical profession is being almost monopolized by women shorthand writers and typists. Why is spinning not a manly occupation? Why is anything that will bring about the economic and spiritual uplift of India (and spinning will, according to the professor) not manly enough for men? Does not the professor know that it was a man who invented the spinning jenny? Had he not invented it, the history of mankind would have been written differently. Needle work is essentially women's work. But the master tailors of the world are men. And it was a man who invented the sewing machine. Had Singer despised the needle, he would not have left his legacy to mankind. Had men taken care of spinning side by side with the women of India in days gone by, we would perhaps have never given up spinning as we did under pressure from the East India Company. The politician may devote himself to pure politics as much as he likes, but if we are to clothe ourselves by the joint effort of millions, the politician, the poet, the potentate, the pandit and the pauper, male or female, Hindu or Mussalman, Christian, Parsi or Jew, will have religiously to give half an hour to spinning for the sake of the country. Religion of humanity is not the exclusive prerogative of any sex or class. It is the prerogative, nay the duty, of all. The religion of Indian humanity demands half an hour's spinning at least from everyone who calls himself or herself Indian.

Young India, 11-6-1925

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'FEED THE MILLIONS'

A member of the 49th Bengali Regiment writes:

"It is admitted on all hands that you are the greatest leader of the world. What is the greatest leader for? The greatest leader is for providing for the starving millions of India! Isn't it? So long as you are not able to feed and clothe the thirtytwo crores of Indians, you can't expect Swaraj. I can give you Swaraj in no time, if you can give me one hundred crores of rupees. You speak of Swaraj, you speak of the charkha, etc., but you do not speak of feeding the starving people. The man who does not get proper food cannot take to the charkha. First of all 'belly', then cloth. I can remain stark naked for a day, but I cannot remain without food even for a couple of hours. If you can feed and give money to the Indians, the Indian masses will at once respond to your call, otherwise not."

In the first place, let me repudiate the 'greatest man' title, though I do not need to do it, as I have never claimed or accepted it. Daily do I feel both my littleness and helplessness. I have never yet realized my greatness. But if 'providing the starving millions' can make me great, I am on the way to greatness. For I claim nothing less for my prescription, the charkha. It is designed to feed and clothe the starving millions. Clothing, I admit, is a secondary consideration. But the charkha is intended to feed first and then to clothe. I have proposed to give not merely one hundred crores of rupees once for all. My proposal is to give sixty crores at least every year. I gladly accept the formula that the famishing masses will respond to the call only of those who give them food and money.

My gift includes both. But who will bell the cat? A physician can prescribe an infallible remedy, he cannot compel the patient to adopt it. The disease of the masses is not want of money so much as it is want of work. Labour is money. He who provides dignified labour for the millions in their cottages, provides food and clothing, or which is the same thing, money. The charkha provides such labour. Till a better substitute is found, it must, therefore, hold the field.

Young India, 18-6-1925

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AGRICULTURE v. KHADDAR

An M. A., B. L. writes thus :

"You are all trying to found a training school for the training of Indian women as nurses and midwives in memory of our Deshbandhu. But what are you going to do for the unemployed and mis-employed young men of Bengal ? You preach against revolution, but no amount of preaching can appease 'hunger'—the source of all bloody revolutions. Is it not high time to think over the unemployment and misemployment problem ? You are raising 10 lacs. Can you not raise 100 lacs ? Provide us with lands and cattle and some cash, and let us go back to agriculture and small industries ! My heart is not in my legal profession. I have no money, no land; what can I do ? I went to the Registrar of the Calcutta University to ask for some lands recently bought by it. I learnt that the 2,000 bighas had been converted into grazing blocks.

There is excellent scope for agriculture here. I earnestly wish to give up my profession and go and live amongst the cultivators, but who is to finance ? Give me money — only rupees two thousand — on loan —on mortgage of the lands to be bought, and I am sure to repay it within two years.

I appeal to you personally. You have helped the khaddar movement. Can you not help agriculture ? Paddy and wheat are as indispensable as khaddar. Let me eat a good bellyful, and I can do anything. Two thousand is not much : I ask a loan, not alms.'

The question of unemployment raised in this letter I have dealt with elsewhere. But as others besides the correspondent have brought the question of agri-

culture in connection with khaddar, it might be as well to deal with the appeal of my lawyer correspondent.

Let me first of all point out to him that he is mistaken in thinking that he has merely to get a loan of two thousand rupees to make his proposed agricultural experiment a 'swinging success'. Indeed agriculture requires just as much application and study as law. The correspondent also seems to labour under the delusion that the message of khaddar is being presented to India in order to clothe the naked. On the contrary, khaddar is intended to serve the same purpose that paddy does. The spinning wheel will provide additional occupation to the millions, which would mean an additional income wherewith to supplement the insufficient food that they are able to get today.

Agriculture is not a dying occupation in India. It requires reform and improvement. But argicultural reforms are possible under a national Government. Individual agricultural effort can leave little impression upon the masses whose sole occupation is agriculture which gives them less than what they need for proper bodily sustenance. If this correspondent is really tired of his profession and wishes to give it up, he must not build castles in the air. He must become an expert spinner, and he will find himself engaged not in spinning for his maintenance but in the organizations that are being conducted in Bengal for propagating spinning and khaddar.

Young India, 30-7-1925

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SNARES OF SATAN

The following extract from a letter of a passionate lover of khaddar will be read with interest:

> "I believe in khaddar. I see the mission of khaddar clear as crystal. It simplifies and hence purifies life. It binds us to the poor by the tie of service. It is the only insurance against poverty which is killing the body and the soul of the nation, for at least as far as the illiterate millions are concerned there is no question of the soul without the body. Realized Yoga and its votaries might talk of it, but for the millions the soul is mockery without the body. Last and not least, the charkha is the only insurance against violent social outbreaks as are now flooding Europe with blood and passions. The charkha brings the masses and the classes together, and as long as India accepts it Bolshevism and kindred violent eruptions would be impossible. These things convince me of the vital need of the charkha. But there is only one difficulty. Can it work? Can it succeed? Can we now plant again the charkha in its old place of sanctity in every home? Is it not too late? Before you went to prison I never would have questioned thus. There was room for hope. But now it is not all hope. And there is Bertrand Russel who says that industrialism is like a force of nature, and India too will be submerged whether we want it or no. Only such people say we should find our own solution for industrialism. There is truth in what they say. Industrialism is flooding all the world, and after the flood they are finding their own solutions. Take Europe. I do not believe that Europe will perish. I have too much faith in human

nature, and human nature will find the remedy sooner or later. Can India, even if she wants to, isolate herself and get out of the clutches of industrialism?"

The argument to which this lover of khaddar has been involuntarily and irresistibly drawn is Satan's old device. He always goes with us half-way, and then suddenly insinuates that it is no good going further, and points to the seeming impossibility of further progress. He applauds virtue, but immediately says that it is not given to man to attain it.

Now the difficulty that has occurred to the friend is a difficulty that faces a reformer at every step. Have not untruth and hypocrisy permeated society? Yet those, who believe in the ultimate triumph of truth, persist in it in the absolute hope of success. A reformer never permits time to run against him, for he defies that ancient enemy. Of course industrialism is like a force of Nature, but it is given to man to control Nature and to conquer her forces. His dignity demands from him resolution in the face of overwhelming odds. Our daily life is such a conquest. An agriculturist knows it only too well.

What is industrialism but a control of the majority by a small minority? There is nothing attractive about it, nor is there anything inevitable n it. If the majority simply wills to say 'no' to the blandishments of the minority, the latter is powerless for mischief.

It is good to have faith in human nature. I live because I have that faith. But that faith does not blind me to the fact of history that, whilst in the ultimate all is well, individuals and groups called nations have before now perished. Rome, Greece, Babylon, Egypt and many others are a standing testimony in proof of the fact that nations have perished before now because of their misdeeds. What may be hoped for is that Europe on account of her fine and scientific intellect will realize the obvious and retrace her steps, and that from the demoralizing

industrialism she will find a way out. It will not necessarily be a return to the old absolute simplicity. But it will have to be a reorganization in which village life will predominate, and in which brute and material force will be subordinated to the spiritual force.

Lastly, we must not be entrapped by false analogies. European writers are handicapped for want of experience and accurate information. They cannot guide us beyond a certain measure if they have to generalize from European examples which cannot be on all fours with Indian conditions, because in Europe they have nothing like the conditions of India, not even excluding Russia. What may be, therefore, true of Europe is not necessarily true of India. We know, too, that each nation has its own characteristics and individuality. India has her own; and if we are to find out a true solution for her many ills, we shall have to take all the idiosyncrasies of her constitution into account and then prescribe a remedy. I claim that to industrialize India in the same sense as Europe is to attempt the impossible. India has stood many a storm. Each has left its own indelible mark, it is true, but she has hitherto dauntlessly maintained her individuality. India is one of the few nations of the earth which have witnessed the fall of many civilizations, herself remaining scatheless. India is one of the few nations on the earth which have retained some of their ancient institutions although they have been overlaid with superstition and error. But she has hitherto shown an inherent capacity for purging herself of error and superstition. My faith in her ability to solve the economic problem that faces her millions has never been so bright as it is today, especially after my study of the conditions in Bengal.

Young India, 6-8-1925

CURRENCY AND COTTON MILLS

Here is a boiled down wail from Trichinopoly:

"It is regrettable to find that in all your speeches you fail to say a single word about the Indian currency problem and how the Government of India is trying to destroy the indigenous industries by raising the exchange to suit the interests of London merchants. Perhaps you are of opinion that about 300 cotton mills started in India are not a national asset, and that the people will be more benefited by the import of cheaper foreign goods from Lancashire. For the past 30 years the adoption of 1 sh. 4 d. to the rupee worked well. Even at that time the Bombay cotton mills were unable to compete with Lancashire owing to the crushing excise duty. There is no excise duty on the jute mills of Calcutta which were declaring a dividend of 100 to 400 for the past eight years. At present the cotton mills are passing through a severe trade depression owing to the huge accumulation of stock from Lancashire which has been dumped into India when the Government of India raised the exchange from 1 sh. 4 d. in 1923 to 1 sh. 6 d. in 1924 to stimulate imports from Great Britain. There is no use of asking the people to burn foreign clothes, or to spin yarn and wear khaddar unless they are sold at a moderate price. The competition from Lancashire owing to the present high exchange will destroy the khaddar industry even more quickly than the mill industry.

In these circumstances I earnestly appeal to the Mahatma to turn his attention more to the industrial regeneration of India by agitating against the present high exchange policy and against the excise duty

> which is unjustly levied upon the cotton mills merely to help Lancashire."

I publish the foregoing not for any merit it contains, but for dispelling the ignorance of methods of warfare the letter woefully betrays. Of course I have not dealt with currency in the pages of *Young India* as I have not dealt with many other evils of the present system of Government, e. g. the huge army expenditure. If any writing of mine could possibly remove these gigantic evils, I would every week recount them and impress the services of friends for the same purpose so as to be able to say the same thing in a variety of ways. But those who think like my correspondent should understand that, if the evils we know still persist, they do so not because they have not been publicly proclaimed or because the rulers do not know them. Abler men than myself have exposed the wickedness of the Government currency policy, but the exposure has proved of no avail. The policy is supported not by force of reason but by the 'sharp edge of the sword'. I am an economist of time and labour. I believe in putting before the readers only those things in which they themselves can, if they will, do something. I do not need to rouse the feeling of the readers in respect of the evils we are suffering from. They feel them daily. But they are helpless. My privilege, therefore, is to place before them a remedy, or remedies if I can think of more than one. At the risk, therefore, of being unpopular and tiresome by reason of repetition I continue with all the capacity at my command to tell the reader how he can help to advance the salvation of this depressed country.

Exclusion of foreign cloth is the one thing which is most practicable and is the most effective remedy for our many ills. I must, therefore, continue to harp on that one (to me) pleasant theme.

The correspondent is wholly mistaken if he thinks that this country has to wait for bringing about exclusion of foreign cloth for a phenomenal reduction in the prices of khaddar or even of indigenous mill cloth. The exclusion will be brought about only when the nation realizes its national *dharma* which she must perform, cost what it may. A good Hindu does not count the cost of performing his Gayatri or his multitudinous ceremonials. A good Mussalman neither counts the cost of offering his prayers five times a day, nor bargains for an easier road to heaven. It is the business of the Manchester merchants to take their calico to the remotest village of India at the lowest price possible. It is the duty of the villager to reject it in preference to his ill-made khaddar, which from a purely economic point of view may cost more than the Manchester calico. Why should we think that any agitation on our part will induce the Manchester merchants to become so philanthropic as to waive the facilities by way of currency and otherwise which they can command from the Government of their own making? Will an Indian merchant similarly placed do otherwise than what his Manchester brother is doing today? The only agitation, therefore, that is relevant and effective is the generation of some kind of force that will effectively prevent the dumping down of Manchester and other foreign cloth on the sacred soil of India. My correspondent must be an indifferent reader of *Young India*, or he should have known that I am not indifferent to the mill industry of my country. I proclaim on every relevant occasion that I want all the protection that I can secure for that industry, and that, if I had the power, I would impose a prohibitive tariff on all foreign cloth. But there my duty ends. The mill industry stands in no need of other support from me. It has capital. It has agents who take its manufactures to all parts of India. It is well able to take care of

itself. Unfortunately it is timid and not national. It thinks in terms of profits of its few shareholders. It takes no note of the masses who are the purchasers of its manufactures. Khaddar is no enemy to that industry. Khaddar is its infant brother standing in need of delicate nursing — all the protection that a loving nurse can extend to it. It therefore commands my exclusive attention, and I endeavour to enlist it from others. When it has grown to maturity, and not before, will be the time to consider the rival claims of the big brother — the mill industry. Only a little clear thinking is required to perceive that rehabilitation of khaddar necessarily means protection for the indigenous mill industry for perhaps a generation to come. But if out of our ignorance we fail to concentrate upon khaddar, not only is khaddar doomed, but with it is doomed the mill industry of India.

Young India, 13-8-1925

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HOOK-WORM AND CHARKHA

In the letter enclosing the cutting about cattle, dealt with elsewhere in this issue, Mr. Andrews writes:

> "I have just had with me here Dr. Tendrich of the Rockfeller International Health Board who has been plodding away in Madras. He tells me that on examination 92 to 95 per cent of the peasantry have hook-worm, and other infections from night-soil like typhoid and dysentry, which are rife owing to evacuations getting everywhere mixed up with the water supply. He says that they were just in the same condition as the Negroes in the Southern States twenty years ago. The consequence also was the same — no vitality, a wretched life of weakness. Now in the very same States today there is prosperity and vitality, because hook-worm, typhoid, etc. have been conquered by the night-soil being got under control. He said to me that, if a change were made in the people's habits in this direction by the very simple method of a village drainage, which would be filled in every six months, and then every six months afterwards dug out and used as a perfectly safe fertilizer, as they do mostly in China, Japan and the States, the economic gain would be so great as to be quite incalculable. My point is that the charkha has opened the village problem, but it has not solved it. And if you say that it alone will solve it, by concentrating on it alone, that is too narrow. The cattle problem and the sanitation problem are equally vital."

In this paragraph Mr. Andrews has raised the question of sanitation. I am not blind to the necessity

of sanitation. I became a sanitary reformer long before I discovered the charkha. I was myself carrying on at the farm in Phoenix, Natal, experiments in burying night-soil and converting it into manure. We had there no scavenger; we were our own scavengers, and as Mr. Andrews himself knows one could walk about the settlement in Phoenix bare-footed without the danger of treading upon any dirt. The same treatment of night-soil is being continued at the Satyagraha Ashram on the banks of the Sabarmati. But I do not carry on any propaganda about it, for the simple reason that it cannot solve the problem of the daily growing poverty immediately and directly. Moreover, in dealing with this question of insanitation, one has to fight against old prejudices and old habits. It is a matter of sustained education and one that cannot be dealt with without State aid. I regret to have to confess that ingrained bad habits handed down from generation to generation do not yield to persuasion. Legislation seems to me to be the only effective remedy.

But the same objection does not apply to the charkha. On the contrary it is to be the precursor of every reform, and if I can only concentrate the attention of the nation upon the charkha, it will automatically solve all the other problems and pave the way for legislation where legislation is required. The charkha is calculated to make an immediate return, be it ever so small, to the individual. It presents the least difficulty in its working. There is no rooted prejudice against it. For the simple folk at least it requires no elaborate reasoning. It needs the smallest capital. It is the only constructive effort that is possible on a national scale. It is fraught with tremendous political consequences if it becomes successful, and seeing that it cannot succeed without co-operation, it makes for a mighty co-operative effort. Hence the claim that concentration on the charkha alone leads to Swaraj.

and if this is too strong a proposition, let it be put in another way—'without the charkha and all it implies there is no Swaraj, and therefore a wise economist will concentrate his attention upon the charkha alone knowing that the rest will follow.'

Let me diagnose the disease a little deeper. It is not the drain that matters so much as poverty, and it is not even poverty that matters so much as idleness which was at first enforced and has now become a habit that matters. The drain may be stopped and poverty is merely a symptom, but idleness is the great cause, the root of all evil, and if that root can be destroyed, most of the evils can be remedied without further effort. A nation that is starving has little hope or initiative left in it. It becomes indifferent to filth and disease. It says of all reforms, 'to what good?' That winter of despair can only be turned into the 'sunshine of hope' for the millions only through the life-giving wheel, the charkha.

Young India, 27-8-1925

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ABOUT THE CHARKHA

I do not think it is necessary to repeat the economic argument about the charkha. The readers of *Young India* are quite familiar with it. The claims of the takli, (Dr. Besant's twirligig) which Gandhiji carries about with himself wherever he goes, as the competitor of the spinning mills, were as seriously listened to as they were advanced by the speaker. The mills could not possibly reach even a fraction of the millions living in the seven hundred thousand villages spread over the vast area of the country, most of them not even reached by the railway line A tenth of the population lived on one meal a day consisting of dry bread and a pinch of dirty salt, and did not, even according to the liberal computation of Lord Curzon, get on an average more than Rs. 3 a month per head. 'Does not a sum of Rs. 5 or 6 per month added to this paltry income mean a fortune to them? Well then the spinning wheel means that to the millions.' It was the only thing that could be made universal, the only thing which did not require any special skill to learn, and which was a marvel of cheapness. The speaker frankly could not think of a device more eminently fitted to solve the problem of the economic distress, famine and flood in India.

And if the economic argument was unassailable, the spiritual which flowed from it was equally so. If the mills made superfluous additions to the treasures of the already rich, the spinning wheel was certainly spiritually superior to it inasmuch as it filled the pockets not of those who were already rich but of the starving and the needy millions. 'I read with deep interest,' said Gandhiji, 'Drummond's book on

The Natural Law in the Spiritual World long ago, and I am sure that, if I had the writer's facile pen, I would demonstrate even better that there is a spiritual law in the natural world.' He had read books by sane men seriously advocating electrocution to end the race of the starving and the diseased and the infirm. It may be an eminently economical remedy, but it was not a human or a spiritual remedy. In the spinning wheel he was offering to his countrymen a spiritual remedy, a remedy with which they had been familiar for ages, and a remedy which if seriously tried would save them from the hideous consequences that town and factory life involved. And need he say anything as to the spiritual reaction on the mind, of the simple instrument ? Well, so many who had tried it bore witness to the fact that it brought peace to the distracted and troubled mind, and the genius of Goethe had woven that effect into song for ages, when he represented Margaret spinning away at the wheel and through its inspiration spinning out of her lips a song as perfect as the yarn from the wheel. He was not an enemy of inventions, said he, clinching the argument, but as matter misplaced was dirt, all inventions misplaced were abominations, to be shunned if they did not add to human dignity and peace.

Questions were invited by the President as soon as Gandhiji concluded. I am afraid the debate was not as lively as one might have expected. Mr. Hobbes, the comic asset of the club, did speak, but was ignored, and the Director of Industries betrayed his ignorance of the Bengal village when he said that yarn could never be a marketable commodity. He seemed for the moment to have forgotten his history when he said that home-spun could scarcely be woven into cloth. He should have known that hundreds of thousands of yards of cloth left the shores of India for export abroad when no one knew the use of the machine.

Gandhiji had studiously avoided the political aspect of the spinning wheel throughout his discourse, but Dr. Sarbadhikari, a Rotarian who spoke last, compelled him to do so. 'If the spinning wheel,' he asked in effect, 'had played such a large part in Hindu ritual and was a living thing in the Bengali home, how had it fallen into disuse? Is it not the cost of the product of the wheel which has driven it out?' That, said Gandhiji, involved the spiritual aspect too. If he had the authority of Queen Elizabeth, he would deal with the question just as she had done. She made it criminal for her people to use Holland lace, and imported workmen from abroad to teach the people how to make lace, and interdicted the use of lace until then. He was not an out and out free trader, and he would, if he could, effectively stop all import of foreign cloth by heavy import duties. 'And you have asked,' said he warming up, 'how the industry had died. Well, it is a painful answer, but I must give it. It was made to die.' He could have narrated the whole blood-curdling tale which tarnishes the record of the East India Company, but he refrained. 'It would make the blood of every honest man and woman boil to turn over the pages written not by Indians but by the servants of the Company. When I tell you that people had to cut off their thumbs in order to escape the terrorism set forth, you would understand the position.' The charkha was not living in every home as Dr. Sarbadhikari had said, it had been killed, and it was now being revived. Every country had to organize its industries, and it did not matter if they had to pay more for their products in the beginning. 'Service before self' was the motto of the Club, and the speaker reminding them of it said, 'You are trustees of the welfare of the people of India. You will have to put service before self, and teach them to feel that they should not have Manchester calico or mill-made cloth when

they can make cloth in their own homes.' He instanced the competition between a foreign Steam Navigation Company and a British Company, where the former went the length of selling tickets almost free for deck passengers which once used to cost Rs. 91, and said: 'Healthy industry cannot stand that competition. You will educate the world opinion against such immoral competition. I want fair competition, and no favour.' After this answer was given, I have no doubt Dr. Sarbadhikari did not regret having asked the question that he did.*

Young India, 27-8-1925

* From an article by M. D. entitled 'At the Rotary Club'.

A GOVERNMENT EXPERIMENT

The other interesting thing I was able to see in Patna was the workshop conducted by the Department of Industries. Shri Rao is the Superintendent. The workshop itself is a modern building, well-lighted, well-ventilated, and well-planned and scrupulously clean. Hand-loom weaving and toy-making, which is the speciality of Patna, are the features of this workshop. Improved looms for weaving tapes and bedstead-straps are commendable. I could, however, not help the feeling that in this admirable workshop the central thing, the spinning wheel, was wanting. Improved toy-making will certainly give better wages to the makers of toys, and it has therefore properly a place in a workshop in a city like Patna. An Indian workshop is also incomplete without hand-loom weaving. But no national department of industries can be considered to be at all complete that takes no note of hand-spinning and therethrough of millions of villagers who are at present without a supplementary industry. The difficulties that were suggested to me in making hand-spinning a success were mainly two:

(1) Hand-spun yarn can never compete with mill-spun yarn because it has never yet been found to be as strong as mill-spun yarn.

(2) The output of the spinning wheel is too small to be profitable.

The experience of those who have worn khaddar for years is that where it is made of good hand-spun yarn it is any day more durable than the best mill-spun cloth of the same count. For instance some of my Andhra friends have shown me their dhotis which have lasted four years and upwards against mill-spun dhotis which wear out inside of a year. But my point is

not that hand spun is more durable, but that hand-spinning being the only possible supplementary industry for the peasantry of India, which means 85 per cent of its population, all our arrangements regarding clothing should be fashioned on the understanding that it must be supplied from hand-spun yarn. Thus our energy should be concentrated not on finding out the best and the cheapest yarn, no matter where and how spun, but on finding out the cheapest and the best hand-spun yarn. If my proposition is sound, all the industrial departments of the nation should revolve round the charkha as the centre. The department of industries, therefore, would make improvements in the spinning wheels so as to increase the output. They would buy hand-spun yarn, so that hand-spinning is automatically stimulated. They would devise means of utilizing every quality of hand-spun yarn obtainable. They would issue prizes for the finest hand-spun yarn. They would explore all possible fields for getting good hand-spun yarn. This does not mean less encouragement to hand-weaving. It simply means adding to the encouragement of hand-weaving and hand-spinning and thereby serving those most in need of help.

But it has been objected that hand-spinning is not profitable. But surely it is profitable for those who have many an idle hour at their disposal and to whose scanty income even a pice is a welcome addition. The whole of the charkha programme falls to pieces if millions of peasants are not living in enforced idleness for at least four months in the year. Wherever khadi workers are doing their labour of love it has become not only profitable but a blessing to villagers to have men who would buy their yarn. Those whose income does not exceed five to six rupees per month and have time at their disposal would gladly take in work that brings them an addition of two rupees per month.

Young India, 8-10-1925

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SUBSIDIARY INDUSTRY PAR EXCELLENCE

A friend sends me the following from Keatinge's *Agricultural Progress in Western India*:

> "Attempts have been made to get cultivators to take up unskilled work such as cotton spinning by hand, but in view of the efficiency of spinning mills such operations can be justified economically on the assumption that the cultivator now wastes so much of his time that any work which he does, however badly paid, will be better than nothing. Unfortunately the existing facts in many cases justify such an assumption, but to condemn the cultivators to this uphill and uneven competition is a counsel of despair. The subsidiary industry par excellence of the cultivator should be breeding and rearing of live stock which provides an occupation and income at all seasons, and returns to the soil the manure which is necessary to maintain it in high fertility."

This question is valuable for its two simple admissions, namely that in many cases the cultivator in India has much time to waste, and that any occupation during that time, however badly paid, is better than nothing. The writer, however, discourages hand-spinning because of the efficiency of spinning mills. Upon a close examination the argument will be found to be fallacious. The cultivator has not to compete with efficient mills at his own door. The only thing he has to compete with is his new-fangled taste for starchy and flimsy mill-made cloth. If he would only revive his old taste and return to the simple but soft and beautiful khaddar, he is never in the danger of having an idle moment thrown upon him. The efficient hotels and bakeries offer no

inducement or competition to the millions of people who prefer their crudely made chapatis to the geometrically rounded and well-baked and well-spiced biscuits. The subsidiary industry of cattle-breeding that has been suggested is no doubt good and any day more paying than spinning. But it requires capital and a knowledge of breeding which the ordinary cultivator does not possess and cannot and will not possess without much previous preparation. Turn it how you will, therefore, for Indian conditions there is no other subsidiary industry that can compete with hand-spinning.

Its inestimable value consists not in its capacity for paying a few individuals highly, but in immediately providing a remunerative occupation for millions. It is the only subsidiary occupation, therefore, that is capable of being successfully organized. Hence not cattle-breeding, however good it is in itself, but hand-spinning is the subsidiary industry par excellence.

Young India, 15-10-1925

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WHO SHOULD SPIN ?

A third interesting reference in the Giridih (Bihar) address was to non-spinning by its labourers. Giridih has several mica mines. It has, therefore, many labourers working in those mines. These labourers get naturally a higher wage than they can possibly get from spinning and they are therefore not spinning at all. As a matter of fact there need have been no such apologetic reference as was made in the address. The readers of *Young India* know that I have never suggested that those who are more lucratively employed should give up their lucrative employment and prefer hand-spinning. I have said repeatedly that those only are expected and should be induced to spin who have no other paying employment, and that too only during the hours of unemployment. The whole theory of hand-spinning is based upon the assumption that there are millions of men and women in this land who are idle for at least four months in the year for want of some employment. There are only, therefore, two classes of people who are expected to spin — those who would spin for hire, whom I have already mentioned, and the thinking part of India who should spin for sacrifice by way of example and in order to cheapen khaddar. But whilst I could understand labourers not spinning, I could not understand their not wearing khaddar. There was no excuse for a single person in that vast audience not to wear khaddar. Giridih can produce and manufacture its own yarn and weave its own khaddar without any difficulty, and in any case can get all its supply of khaddar ready-made and comparatively cheap from the other parts of Bihar. But I notice that whilst these addresses

admit shortcomings about khaddar and the charkha, they are mentioned, I fear, not as an earnest of reform in the immediate future but by way of consolation for continuing the same state of things. A confession is good only when it is intended to be followed up by a retracing; it is worse than useless when it is used to harden oneself against a change. I hope that the confessions made in the many addresses presented to me will be precursors of a definite change.

Young India, 22-10-1925

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SPURIOUS KHADI

A friend sends me a pictorial card taken from spurious khadi woven in one of the Indian mills. It has printed upon it a charkha with a basket full of slivers and a few bobbins with yarn wound upon them lying in front. My correspondent tells me that such imitation khadi is manufactured in almost all the Indian mills and such stuff is sent here by Japan also. He adds that poor people who know that they should wear khadi, when they see a charkha stamp upon it and upon applying at the shops have stuff looking like khadi given to them, unquestioningly buy it, and flatter themselves with the belief that they have done something towards the alleviation of the economic distress of India. It is a thousand pities that mill-owners should lack all patriotic fervour and in order to swell dividends, or, maybe now, to be able to keep the mills going, pay no regard to the national will. And yet people are not wanting who expect with the assistance of Indian mills to achieve the boycott of foreign cloth. The tremendous mistake underlying such belief consists in supposing that the mill industry can ever be utilized for the national purpose before khadi has attained a proper commercial footing. I doubt not that one day all the mills will fall into line with the great national purpose; but that time will not come before khadi can hold its own against the whole world, in other words, before the national taste has undergone such a revolution that the general body of people would refuse to wear anything but khadi and they will have been so far educated as to be able without difficulty to distinguish between real khadi and the base imitation.

Young India, 29-10-1925

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THE POET AND THE CHARKHA

When Sir Rabindranath's criticism of the charkha was published some time ago, several friends asked me to reply to it. Being heavily engaged I was unable then to study it in full. But I had read enough of it to know its trend. I was in no hurry to reply. Those who had read it were too much agitated or influenced to be able to appreciate what I might have then written even if I had the time. Now, therefore, is really the time for me to write on it and to ensure a dispassionate view being taken of the Poet's criticism or my reply if such it may be called.

The criticism is a sharp rebuke to Acharya Ray for his impatience of the Poet's and Acharya Seal's position regarding the charkha, and a gentle rebuke to me for my exclusive and excessive love of it. Let the public understand that the Poet does not deny its great economic value. Let them know that he signed the appeal for the All India Deshbandhu Memorial after he had written his criticism. He signed the appeal after studying its contents carefully, and even as he signed it he sent me the message that he had written something on the charkha which might not quite please me. I knew, therefore, what was coming. But it has not displeased me. Why should mere disagreement with my views displease? If every disagreement were to displease, since no two men agree exactly on all points, life would be a bundle of unpleasant sensations and therefore a perfect nuisance. On the contrary the frank criticism pleases me. For our friendship becomes all the richer for our disagreements. Friends to be friends are not called upon to agree even on most points. Only disagreements must

have no sharpness, much less bitterness, about them. And I gratefully admit that there is none about the Poet's criticism.

I am obliged to make these prefatory remarks as dame rumour has whispered that jealousy is the root of all that criticism. Such baseless suspicion betrays an atmosphere of weakness and intolerance. A little reflection must remove all ground for such a cruel charge. Of what should the Poet be jealous in me? Jealousy presupposes the possibility of rivalry. Well, I have never succeeded in writing a single rhyme in my life. There is nothing of the Poet about me. I cannot aspire after his greatness. He is the undisputed master of it. The world today does not possess his equal as a Poet. My 'Mahatma'ship has no relation to the Poet's undisputed position. It is time to realize that our fields are absolutely different and at no point overlapping. The Poet lives in a magnificent world of his own creation—his world of ideas. I am a slave of somebody else's creation—the spinning wheel. The Poet makes his Gopis dance to the tune of his flute. I wander after my beloved Sita, the charkha, and seek to deliver her from the ten-headed monster from Japan, Manchester, Paris, etc. The Poet is an inventor—he creates, destroys and recreates. I am an explorer, and having discovered a thing I must cling to it. The Poet presents the world with new attractive things from day to day. I can merely show the hidden possibilities of old and even worn out things. The world easily finds an honourable place for the magician who produces new and dazzling things. I have to struggle laboriously to find a corner for my worn out things. Thus there is no competition between us. But I may say in all humility that we complement each the other's activity.

The fact is that the Poet's criticism is a poetic licence, and he who takes it literally is in danger of finding himself in an awkward corner. An ancient poet

has said that Solomon arrayed in all his glory was not like one of the lilies of the field. He clearly referred to the natural beauty and innocence of the lily contrasted with the artificiality of Solomon's glory and his sinfulness in spite of his many good deeds. Or take the poetical licence in 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' We know that no camel has ever passed through the eye of a needle, and we know too that rich men like Janaka have entered the Kingdom of Heaven. Or take the beautiful simile of human teeth being likened to the pomegranate seed. Foolish women who have taken the poetical exaggeration literally have been found to disfigure and even harm their teeth. Painters and poets are obliged to exaggerate the proportions of their figures in order to give true perspective. Those, therefore, who take the Poet's denunciation of the charkha literally will be doing an injustice to the Poet and an injury to themselves.

The Poet does not, he is not expected, he has no need, to read *Young India*. All he knows about the movement is what he has picked up from table talk. He has, therefore, denounced what he has imagined to be the excesses of the charkha cult.

He thinks, for instance, that I want everybody to spin the whole of his or her time to the exclusion of all other activity, that is to say, I want the poet to forsake his muse, the farmer his plough, the lawyer his brief, and the doctor his lancet. So far is this from truth that I have asked no one to abandon his calling, but on the contrary to adorn it by giving every day only thirty minutes to spinning as sacrifice for the whole nation. I have indeed asked the famishing man or woman who is idle for want of any work whatsoever to spin for a living, and the half-starved farmer to spin during his leisure hours to supplement his slender resources. If the Poet span for half an hour

daily, his poetry would gain in richness. For it would then represent the poor man's wants and woes in a more forcible manner than now.

The Poet thinks that the charkha is calculated to bring about a deathlike sameness in the nation, and thus imagining he would shun it if he could. The truth is that the charkha is intended to realize the essential and living oneness of interest among India's myriads. Behind the magnificent and kaleidoscopic variety one discovers in nature a unity of purpose, design and form which is equally unmistakable. No two men are absolutely alike, not even twins, and yet there is much that is indispensably common to all mankind. And behind the commonness of form there is the same life pervading all. The idea of sameness or oneness was carried by Shankara to its utmost logical and natural limit, and he exclaimed that there was only one truth, one God — Brahman, and all form, *nama, rupa,* was illusion or illusory, evanescent. We need not debate whether what we see is unreal, and whether the real behind the unreality is what we do not see. Let both be equally real, if you will. All I say is that there is a sameness, identity or oneness behind the multiplicity and variety. And so do I hold that behind a variety of occupations there is an indispensable sameness also of occupation. Is not agriculture common to the vast majority of mankind? Even so was spinning common not long ago to a vast majority of mankind. Just as both prince and peasant must eat and clothe themselves, so must both labour for supplying their primary wants. The Prince may do so if only by way of symbol and sacrifice, but that much is indispensable for him if he will be true to himself and his people. Europe may not realize this vital necessity at the present moment, because it has made of exploitation of non-European races a religion. But it is a false religion bound to perish in the near future. The non-European races will not for ever

allow themselves to be exploited. I have endeavoured to show a way out that is peaceful, humane and therefore noble. It may be rejected. If it is, the alternative is a tug of war, in which each will try to pull down the other. Then, when non-Europeans will seek to exploit the Europeans, the truth of the charkha will have to be realized. Just as, if we are to live, we must breathe not air imported from England nor eat food so imported, so may we not import cloth made in England. I do not hesitate to carry the doctrine to its logical limit and say that Bengal dare not import her cloth even from Bombay or from Banga Lakshmi. If Bengal will live her natural and free life without exploiting the rest of India or the world outside, she must manufacture her cloth in her own villages as she grows her corn there. Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labour. An improved plough is a good thing. But if by some chance one man could plough up, by some mechanical invention of his, the whole of the land of India and control all the agricultural produce, and if the millions had no other occupation, they would starve, and being idle, they would become dunces, as many have already become. There is hourly danger of many more being reduced to that unenviable state. I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace the hand labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes.

The Irish analogy does not take us very far. It is perfect in so far as it enables us to realize the necessity of economic co-operation. But Indian circumstances being different, the method of working out co-operation is necessarily different. For Indian distress every effort at co-operation has to centre round the

charkha, if it is to apply to the majority of the inhabitants of this vast peninsula 1,900 miles long and 1,500 broad. A Sir Gangaram may give us a model farm which can be no model for the penniless Indian farmer who has hardly two to three acres of land which every day runs the risk of being still further cut up.

Round the charkha, that is amidst the people who have shed their idleness and who have understood the value of co-operation, a national servant would build up a programme of anti-malaria campaign, improved sanitation, settlement of village disputes, conservation and breeding of cattle, and hundreds of other beneficial activities. Wherever charkha work is fairly established all such ameliorative activity is going on according to the capacity of the villagers and the workers concerned.

It is not my purpose to traverse all the Poet's arguments in detail. Where the differences between us are not fundamental — and these I have endeavoured to state — there is nothing in the Poet's argument which I cannot endorse and still maintain my position regarding the charkha. The many things about the charkha which he has ridiculed I have never said. The merits I have claimed for the charkha remain undamaged by the Poet's battery.

One thing, and one thing only, has hurt me — the Poet's belief, again picked up from table talk, that I look upon Ram Mohan Roy as a 'pigmy'. Well, I have never anywhere described that great reformer as a pigmy, much less regarded him as such. He is to me as much a giant as he is to the Poet. I do not remember any occasion save one when I had to use Ram Mohan Roy's name. That was in connection with Western education. This was on the Cuttack sands now four years ago. What I do remember having said was that it was possible to attain highest culture without Western education. And when someone mentioned Ram Mohan Roy, I remember having said that he was a pigmy

compared to the unknown authors, say, of the Upanishads. This is altogether different from looking upon Ram Mohan Roy as a pigmy. I do not think meanly of Tennyson if I say that he was a pigmy before Milton or Shakespeare. I claim that I enhance the greatness of both. If I adore the Poet, as he knows I do in spite of differences between us, I am not likely to disparage the greatness of the man who made the great reform movement of Bengal possible and of which the Poet is one of the finest of fruits.

Young India, 5-11-1925

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PANDIT NEHRU AND KHADDAR

Pandit Motilalji has never been *persona grata* with *The Times of India.* The latest offence committed by him is that of hawking khaddar in Allahabad where only a few years ago he could hardly be seen going anywhere except in his grand motor car. But in the elegant language of the writer: 'Even in India it must be recognized that Pandit Nehru is making an ass of himself.' It is to be wished that many leaders will follow Panditji and earn the title that has been so courteously bestowed upon Panditji by *The Times of India.* It is generally time to rejoice when one receives a curse from opponents. Their praises should make one cautious. The Romans feared the Greeks especially when they brought gifts.

The Times writer has outdone himself in showing his contempt for the Congress, khaddar and Congressmen. I must let the reader judge for himself. The writer says:

> "The completeness of the Congress collapse, the utter futility of the so-called Congress creed, and the total absence among Congress supporters of a single reasonable political idea are illustrated by a telegram despatched in all earnestness from Allahabad."

The writer then proceeds:

> "If the British public learnt that Lord Birkenhead, wearing Union Jack waist coat, had been selling true blue Tory rosettes beneath the lions in Trafalgar Square, that Mr. Baldwin had been promoting Empire industries by hawking trays of British toys in Picadilly, that Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, attired in corduroys and a muffler, had been disposing of red flags among the workers in Limehouse, or that the Clydeside

Bolshevists had set up a stall on Clydeside for the sale of miniature sickles and hammers, the unanimous conclusion of all classes would be that their leaders had gone mad."

The inference naturally is that the distinguished hawkers of khaddar such as Pandit Nehru and Shri Rangaswami Iyengar who accompanied him in his hawking have gone mad. The language used by the writer is not only insulting but it is also highly misleading. What possible comparison can there be between 'true blue Tory rosettes' hawked by a British Tory, and khaddar which, rightly or wrongly, represents to thousands of Indians an emblem of a real bond between the classes and the masses? For only by khaddar the classes, through whom the British Government holds sway over the toiling dumb millions, could make some little return to the masses for the bleeding process which the latter have to undergo in order to feed the British Government. The insult has been possible only because the fashion has been set by the Liberal politicians to belittle khadi and all it means. Who does not remember that at the time the war broke out young and old, men and women, great and small, in fact all who were not enlisted or could not be enlisted as soldiers, were expected to sew, as a matter of fact did sew, garments for the wounded soldiers who were received in the various hospitals? People at that time vied with one another in doing this little service, and those who did not know how to stitch were thankful if they received preliminary training from their neighbours. All distinctions were erased in the face of the awful calamity that had overtaken the British people. I make bold to say that, if it was patriotic and necessary for everyone to do the sewing and hundreds of other odd jobs which in ordinary life they never did, it is a thousand times necessary and patriotic for every Indian to wear khaddar to the exclusion of all foreign cloth and thus find the only occupation, i. e. of hand-spinning,

which is possible for the millions of India to undertake.

We read in English books that when a movement is ridiculed by its opponents it may be said to be making headway, and when it excites the anger of their opponents it is said to be producing the desired effect. If *The Times of India* at all represents British public opinion, khaddar is evidently producing the desired effect.

The writer of the article in question assures the readers that 'the Allahabad public does not want the Congress grave-clothes,' as he has called khaddar, 'any more than they are wanted in any other part of India.' If so, it is difficult to understand all the contempt poured upon khaddar. But it is for the Congress leaders to prove that khaddar is not the 'grave-clothes' of the Congress, but that it establishes an unbreakable link between the Congress and the masses and thus makes the former more representative than it ever has been.

In fairness, however, to Europeans, let me say that in the venomous abuse of khaddar *The Times of India* writer by no means represents the general European opinion. I know several Europeans in India who believe in the message of khaddar and some who use it themselves. Its message has even reached Europe. Here is a letter from a professor from far-off Poland regarding khaddar:

> "Do you think it would be a good thing if an attempt were made to sell Indian tissues in Europe to friends of India? I might try on a small scale here if you send me tissues of your cloth with indication of prices in English currency and an English address to which the money could be sent. I think that, even if the amount of sales would not be very great, it would be useful for propaganda, and I hope that many people at least in Poland would be proud and happy to wear Indian cloth in

order to show their sympathy with your work. . . . This is perhaps the most efficient way to gain universal sympathy for the emancipation of India. I could not easily undertake to spin myself, but I can undertake to go from house to house and encourage the buying of Indian cloth even if it is more expensive than our own products."

Young India, 15-4-1926

52

MY KAMADHENU

I know that I have been ridiculed by some people for calling the spinning wheel a gateway to my salvation. But even so may a person who makes himself a little ball of clay, gives to it the imposing name of Parthiweshwar Chintamani, and concentrates on it all the faculties of his being in the hope of 'seeing God face to face' by that means, be sneered at by those who do not share his faith in the life-giving power of his image. But would he, madly bent as he is on attaining self-realization, give up his worship on this account? No. On the contrary he will strive on without flagging till success crowns his efforts, as in the end it must, while his detractors will only be the worse off for their gibes. Similarly, if my conception of the spinning wheel comes from a pure heart, it will become to me the means of my salvation. A faithful Hindu's ears will automatically turn to the direction where Ramanama is being repeated, and for the time being all the evil passions will subside in him. What does it matter if the repetition of that divine name fail to produce any impression on others? A Hindu may not be in the least affected by the cry of Alla ho Akbar, but a Mussalman is roused by it. Similarly, a pious Englishman, the moment he is reminded of the presence within him of God, will be able to restrain his passion and compose himself for the time being. As is the spirit behind worship, so is the fruit thereof.

It follows then that, even if the spinning wheel be in itself nothing and the virtues that I have attributed to it exist only in my imagination, it will still prove at least to me my Kamadhenu, i. e., Cow of

Plenty. I think of the poor of India every time that I draw a thread on the wheel. The poor of India today have lost faith in God, more so in the middle classes or the rich. For a person suffering from the pangs of hunger, and desiring nothing but to fill his belly, his belly is his God. To him anyone who gives him bread is his Master. Through him he may even see God. To give alms to such persons, who are sound in all their limbs, is to debase oneself and them. What they need is some kind of occupation, and the occupation that will give employment to millions can only be hand-spinning. But I can instil my faith in the potency of hand-spinning in the minds of the toilers of India not by making speeches but only by spinning myself. Therefore I have described my spinning as a penance or sacrament. And, since I believe that where there is pure and active love for the poor there is God also, I see God in every thread that I draw on the spinning wheel.

Young India, 20-5-1926

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SPINNING AN ART ?

A Madras Inspectress of Education has pronounced sentence against the spinning wheel for Brahmin girls. This judgment of hers has given rise to criticism against the lady. If the charkha is good enough for non-Brahmin girls, why not, it is argued, for Brahmin girls ? The question is apposite when caste arrogance is being levelled to the ground. Moreover the Inspectress evidently does not know that the finest yarn is spun by Brahmin girls, and that in many Brahmin families the tradition of spinning for the sacred thread is still kept up.

But a side question has arisen out of the criticism of the Inspectress. Is spinning an art ? Is it not a humdrum monotonous process likely to weary the children? Well all the evidence hitherto collected goes to show that spinning is an elegant art and that the process itself is extremely pleasant. No mechanical pull is enough to draw the various counts. And those who do spinning as an art know the pleasure they derive when the fingers and the eyes infallibly guide the required count. Art to be art must soothe. I reproduced over a year ago the testimony of Sir Prabhashanker Pattani to show how after the day's trying work he went to the charkha for soothing his nerves and giving him undisturbed sleep. I extract the following passage from the letter of a friend who found solace for her shattered nerves in spinning :

> "When . . . . I hastened to my room and then in the dark struggled with an anguish which rent me from top to toe, I prayed and strove for some time and then turned to the spinning wheel and found in it a magical comfort. The quiet regular

motion of its rhythm immediately steadied me and the thought of its service brought me nearer to God."

This is not the solitary experience of one or two but of many spinners. It is, however, no use saying that spinning will be pleasurable to all because it has been the joy of many. Painting is acknowledged to be an exquisite art, but it is not everybody who takes to it.

Young India, 27-5-1926

THE COBWEBS OF IGNORANCE

An English writer has observed that in vindicating truth there is far more labour in disentangling the knots of ignorance than in propounding the truth itself. Truth is by nature self-evident. As soon as you remove the cobwebs of ignorance that surround it, it shines clear. That is just the sort of handicap under which the simple and straight movement of the spinning wheel is labouring today. It is expected to fulfil conditions which no one ever claimed it to fulfil, and when it fails to do so, the blame is laid at its door rather than at the critics! A capital illustration of this is afforded by some paragraphs sent by a lover of khadi, the substance of which is:

> "1. Now that you have begun to claim the spinning wheel as a universal provider, it has simply filled us with disgust. And so today we, the intelligentsia, repudiate you and your spinning wheel alike.
>
> 2. It may be possible to introduce hand-spinning in small villages, and if you confined yourself simply to that, nobody would criticize you and you might even get some sympathy.
>
> 3. But when you try to make out that even spiritual salvation can come through the spinning wheel you make yourself ridiculous. But you being a 'great' man, it is just possible that some simple-minded people may swallow whatever you say. The educated are not going to stand your nonsense any more; because you have now cast all moderation to the winds, and particularly since your voluntary retirement you have not hesitated to prescribe the spinning wheel to everybody and for every conceivable object under heaven. Does one want to observe

brahmacharya? Let him take to the spinning wheel. Do you want to secure the release of the innocent Bengal patriots who are in jail? Ply the wheel. Do you want to ameliorate the economic condition of India? Why, then, the wheel again! Not only this, you have even offered the spinning wheel to veteran soldiers fit to wield the sword and the spear. The wonder is that you do not perceive the utter madness of all this.

4. What would it matter to Britain if India ceased to purchase sixty crore rupees worth of cloth from her? Do you suppose that that would make her abdicate her political power in India? See how woefully mistaken you are in declaring that there is no political programme more valuable than hand-spinning.

5. You have yet to prove that the spinning wheel can solve even the bread problem for the masses. The harm that has resulted from it, on the other hand, is quite apparent. Just think of the khadi shops that have come to grief already!

6. You even seem to suggest that other industrial activities should be dropped for the sake of hand-spinning."

I have condensed the objections in my own words. I do not think that I have thereby done the writer any injustice. On the contrary I have erred, if at all, in removing or toning down the bitterness of his writing. An embittered patriot has a right to employ harsh language towards a person who has come to be dubbed a 'Mahatma'. For it enables him to mollify, to some extent at least, his rising anger over the spectacle of destitution that his country presents on the one hand and its utter helplessness to remedy it on the other. My duty is not to advertise his anger but to try, if it is at all possible, to remove the confusion engendered by that anger.

To proceed now to the examination of the six points of the correspondent:

1. I have never tried to make anyone regard the spinning wheel as his Kamadhenu or universal provider. I have certainly regarded it as my Kamadhenu, and in this I have done nothing more than what crores of Hindus in India are today doing when they take up a little bit of clay, mould it into a small oval ball, mentally invest it with the Divine presence, and make it their Kamadhenu by offering up their entire being to it. They do not ask their neighbours to worship it; on the contrary after their worship is over, they consign that sacred ball of clay to the waters. Why should then the intelligentsia feel disgusted if, with crores of my fellows, I lose my head and make the spinning wheel my Kamadhenu? May I not expect a measure of toleration from them? But as a matter of fact the intelligentsia as a body have not given me the go-by yet. To believe or give others believe, therefore, that all the intelligentsia are disgusted because a few are, is hardly proper. But supposing for the time being that all of them do actually abandon me altogether, then, if my faith is inviolate, as all true faith must be, it will simply blaze forth and burn all the brighter for that reason. When in 1908, on board s. s. Kildonan Castle, I declared my faith in the spinning wheel in the pages of *Hind Swaraj* (*Indian Home Rule)*, I stood absolutely alone. Will then my God, who guided my pen into making that declaration of faith at that time, abandon me when it is put on its trial?

2. It is in the villages only that the spinning wheel is largely meant to be introduced, and it is just there that it is at present going on. And if today I beg for sympathy and support, it is for its revival in our villages. Again, it is just for this that I have to canvass the sympathy of the educated class. For, just as if we want to teach our villagers who are ignorant

how to protect themselves against the ravages of malaria and such other diseases, some people from the educated and middle class will first have to become adepts in the knowledge of the sanitary measures necessary to extirpate these diseases and to observe the rules themselves, similarly it is only when some of us learn spinning and practise it ceaselessly ourselves that we shall be able to teach it to our villagers and overcome their apathy by our personal example. And it goes without saying that unless we use the khadi that they produce the spinning wheel cannot live. My appeal to the people who live in the cities, therefore, is to spin for sacrifice, while their brethren in the villages do it for reward. The thing is simplicity itself. If only we get at the heart of it, we will find that it hardly affords any room for criticism.

3. I do regard the spinning wheel as a gateway to my spiritual salvation, but I recommend it to others only as a powerful weapon for the attainment of Swaraj and the amelioration of the economic condition of the country. To those also who aspire to observe brahmacharya I do present the spinning wheel. It is not a thing to be despised, for it is experience here that speaks. A person who wants to subdue his passions has need to be calm. All commotion within him ought to cease; and so quiet and gentle is the motion of the spinning wheel that it has been known to still the passions of those who have turned it in the fullness of faith. I have been able to compose my anger by turning it, and I can adduce similar testimony of several other brahmacharis. Of course it would be quite easy to laugh down all such persons as fools and nincompoops, but it would not be found to be cheap in the end. For the scoffer in a fit of anger loses a beautiful means wherewith to compose his passions and attain vigour and strength. I therefore particularly recommend to every young man and young woman who reads these lines to give the spinning

wheel a trial. They will find that shortly after they sit down to spin their passions begin to subside. I do not mean to say that they would remain calm for all the rest of the day even after the spinning is discontinued; for human passions are fleeter even than the wind, and to subdue them completely requires no end of patience. All that I claim is that in the spinning wheel they will find a powerful means of cultivating steadiness. But then, someone will ask, why do not I recommend the far more poetical rosary, if that is the purpose which it is intended to subserve? My reply to this is that the spinning wheel possesses some virtues in addition to those it has in common with the rosary. I have not prescribed it for a recluse living in a state of nature in a cave of the Himalayas and subsisting on the herbs and roots of the forest. I have placed it only before such countless persons like myself who, while living in the work-a-day world, are anxious to serve the country and to practise brahmacharya simultaneously.

And as for ridiculing my suggestion to ply the spinning wheel for securing the release of the Bengal prisoners, it only comes to this that we are not prepared to stir ourselves a single inch to secure their release. For the spinning wheel here means the boycott of all forign cloth. And what a compelling force that has and how we are at present unable to develop any other kind of force, we shall presently see as we proceed with our examination of the other points that follow. My presenting the spinning wheel even to veteran soldiers fit to wield the lance and the sword, therefore, is not a sign of madness but a hall-mark of knowledge — a knowledge not derived merely from book-learning but from the plentitude of experience.

4. The question as to what loss would the British suffer if India stopped purchasing her sixty crore rupees worth of cloth from them is quite out of place. Our duty is simply to see whether and if so how far it

would profit us. The stopping of the purchase of sixty crores worth of foreign cloth would, in the first place, mean the saving of so much money to the crores of Indian homes. In other words, it would mean so much addition to their income. Then it would spell the creation of so much fresh industry, the organization of crores into a joint co-operative effort, the conservation and utilization of the energy of the millions, and the dedication of crores of lives to the service of the motherland. The carrying out of such a gigantic task would, further, give us a realization of our own strength. It would mean our acquiring a thorough mastery of the detail and innumerable knotty problems which it presents, e. g. learning to keep account of every pie, learning to live in the villages in sanitary and healthy conditions, removing the difficulties that block the way and so on. For, unless we learn all this, we would not be able to accomplish this task. The spinning wheel, then, provides us with a means for generating this capacity in us. So long, therefore, as one has not grasped the inner meaning of the wheel one may ridicule it, but when once the grand meaning is understood it would become simply impossible to tear oneself away from it.

Again, the British are an intelligent people. The officials are a wise and shrewd lot. I know this. That is why I present the spinning wheel to my people. We cannot overreach the British by the glibness of our tongue or by the power of our pen. Our threats they have grown quite accustomed to, while as for our physical prowess it can avail us but little against their bombs rained down from the aeroplanes. But these people understand and respect patience, perseverance, determination, and capacity for organization. Cloth represents the biggest item of their trade. The accomplishment of its boycott by us would awaken them to a sense of our strength. They are not holding India merely to feed their pride; nor is it by

mere force of arms, but it is by tact and cunning that their rule over us is maintained. When their trade is made to rest on our untramelled, free will, their rule also will undergo a similar transformation. Today both are being imposed on us against our will. If we succeed in shaping one of them according to our will, the other will automatically follow suit. But it is easy enough to understand that while their trade relations with us remain unchanged no change in the political relationship is possible.

I may repeat that I would today discard the spinning wheel if someone shows a better and more universal political programme than hand-spinning. But up to this time I have found none, I have been shown none. I am anxious to know if there is any.

5. That the spinning wheel can solve our bread-problem hardly needs to be proved to a reader of *Navajivan*. The figures published about various khadi organizations would show that thousands of poor women are today eking out their living by spinning. Nobody has yet denied that the spinning wheel can bring the spinner at least an anna a day. And there are crores of people in India who hardly earn even a pice a day. So long as things stand thus, it is hardly necessary to point out the close relation that exists between the spinning wheel and the bread-problem.

As for the charge that the spinning wheel has done harm to the country, it is up to those who level it to prove it. This activity is by its very nature such that there can be no waste of effort in it. Nothing can interrupt its continuity, and even a little exercise of it saves one from mighty evils. What does it matter if some khadi shops came to an end? That phenomenon is common to every trade. The money invested in them has at least remained in the country, while the experience gained through it has enabled us to make further progress. Besides, if some of the shops had to close down, instances can be

cited of many more, better organized shops that have grown up in their place.

6. I have not contemplated, much less advised, the abandonment of as ingle healthy, life-giving industrial activity for the sake of hand-spinning. The entire foundation of the spinning wheel rests on the fact that there are crores of semi-unemployed people in India. And I should admit that, if there were none such, there would be no room for the spinning wheel. But as a matter of fact everybody who has been to our villages knows that they have months of idleness which may prove their ruin. Even my appeal to the middle class people to spin for sacrifice is with reference to their spare hours. The spinning wheel movement is destructive of no enterprise whatever. It is a life-giving activity. And that is why I have called it *Annapurna* or the butter for bread or the replenisher.

Young India, 27-5-1926

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CO-OPERATION IN SPINNING

A dear friend asks me to answer the question that has occurred to him and his other friends. 'Is there co-operation in spinning? Does it not rather make people purely individualistic, self-centred, and keep them separate from one another even as so many pebbles?'

The briefest and the most decisive answer I can give is: 'Go, watch any well-organized spinning centre, and test the thing for yourself. You will then discover that spinning cannot succeed without co-operation.'

But brief though this answer is, it is, I know, useless for those (and they are the majority) who cannot or will not make the time for paying such a visit. I must, therefore, try to convince by describing such a centre in the best way I can.

In speaking to a co-operative society in Madras last year I said that through hand-spinning I was trying to found the largest co-operative society known to the world. This is not an untrue claim. It may be ambitious. It is not untrue because hand-spinning cannot serve the purpose for which it is intended unless millions actually co-operate in it.

The purpose is to drive away enforced idleness and pauperism which is the result mainly of that idleness in India. This purpose, it will be admitted, is grand enough. The effort must be correspondingly great.

There must be co-operation from the very commencement. If spinning makes one self-reliant, it also enables one to understand the necessity of inter-dependence almost at every step. An ordinary spinner must find a ready market for the surplus yarn. She cannot weave it. There can be no market for her

yarn without the co-operation of a large number of people. Just as our agriculture is possible only because there is co-operation, be it ever so little, of millions in regard to the cultivation and disposal of the produce, so will spinning be successful only if there is co-operation on an equally large scale.

Take the working of a typical centre. At the central office is collected seed cotton for spinners. The cotton is ginned by ginners perhaps at the centre. It is distributed then among carders who re-deliver it in the shape of slivers. These are now ready to be distributed among the spinners who bring their yarn from week to week and take away fresh slivers and their wages in return. The yarn thus received is given to weavers to weave and received back for sale in the shape of khadi. This latter must now be sold to the wearers—the general public. Thus the centre office has to be in constant living human touch with a very large number of people irrespective of caste, colour or creed. For the centre has no dividends to make, has no exclusive care but the care of the most needy. The centre to be useful must keep itself clean in every sense of the term. The bond between it and the component parts of the vast organization is purely spiritual or moral. A spinning centre, therefore, is a co-operative society whose members are ginners, carders, spinners, weavers and buyers — all tied together by a common bond, mutual goodwill, and service. In this society the course of every pice can be traced almost with certainty as it floats to and fro. And as these centres grow and draw the youth of the country who have the fire of patriotism burning brightly in their hearts and whose purity will stand the strain of all temptation, they will, they must, become centres for radiating elementary knowledge of hygiene, sanitation, domestic treatment of simple diseases among the villagers, and education among their children suited to their needs. That time is not yet. The beginning

indeed has been made. But the movement can grow only slowly. It is not possible to show substantial results till khadi has become a salable article in the bazaar like ghee or, better still, postage stamp. For the present a vast amount of energy has to be spent in educating the people to buy khadi in the place of any other cloth, even as a child would eat and bless the rice cooked by its mother without stopping to think of the quality or the price of the rice so cooked. If it did, it would find that the rice cooked by the mother was far too dear for the labour and the love spent upon the working. And so will it be with khadi one day, when the children of Mother Hind wake from their deep sleep and realize that yarn spun and worked by the hands of her daughters and sons can never be too dear for her crores of children. When this simple truth dawns upon us, spinning centres will multiply a hundredfold, a ray of hope will penetrate the dark Indian cottages, and that hope will be the surest foundation for the freedom we want but do not know how to achieve.

Young India, 10-6-1926

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SOME KNOTTY POINTS

A medical friend from far-off Burma writes: 'Why do you emphasize khaddar and not Swadeshi? Is not Swadeshi the principle and khaddar a mere detail?'

I do not regard khaddar to be a detail. Swadeshi is a theoretical term. Khaddar is the concrete and central fact of Swadeshi. Swadeshi without khaddar is like the body without life, fit only to receive a decent burial or cremation. The only Swadeshi cloth is khaddar. If one is to interpret Swadeshi in the language of and in terms of the millions of this country, khaddar is a substantial thing in Swadeshi like the air we breathe. The test of Swadeshi is not the universality of the use of an article which goes under the name of Swadeshi, but the universality of participation in the production or manufacture of such an article. Thus considered mill-made cloth is Swadeshi only in a restricted sense. For in its manufacture only an infinitesimal number of India's millions can take part. But in the manufacture of khaddar millions can take part. The more the merrier. With khaddar, in my opinion, is bound up the welfare of millions of human beings. Khaddar is, therefore the largest part of Swadeshi, and it is the only true demonstration of it. All else follows from it. India can live even if we do not use brass buttons or tooth-picks made in India. But India cannot live if we refuse to manufacture and wear khaddar. Khaddar will cease to have this paramount importance when a more profitable employment is discovered for the idle hours of India's millions.

But says the Doctor, 'Good khaddar is costly and the ordinary variety is ugly.'

I deny that any khaddar is ugly. Want of the dead-sameness of a machine-made article is not a sign of ugliness, but it is a sign of life, even as absence of sameness in the millions of leaves of a tree is no sign of its ugliness. As a matter of fact, it is the variety about the leaves which gives a tree its lifelike beauty. I can picture a machine-made tree whose every leaf would be absolutely the same size. It would look a ghastly thing, because we have not yet ceased to love the living tree. And why should the cost of khaddar, good or bad, worry us if every penny we pay for it goes directly into the pockets of the starving millions? My experience is that in the majority of cases where people have taken to khaddar they have revised their tastes about dress. Though khaddar may be dearer yard per yard than the same quality of Manchester calico, the rejection of superfluous clothing more than balances the extra cost. Those who wish to wear fine khaddar can now obtain it at all the principal khadi centres.

The medical friend next questions the desirability of spinning, and gravely suggests that, if everybody would spin, the poor people who depend upon spinning for their livelihood would be losers. He forgets that those who are called upon to spin by way of sacrifice promote the khaddar atmosphere and make it possible to render spinning easier and by small inventions and discoveries make it more profitable. The wages of professional spinners cannot suffer in any way whatsoever by sacrificial spinning.

The friend then asks: 'Should doctors cease to prescribe foreign drugs and instead learn the use of Ayurvedic and Unani drugs?'

I have never considered the exclusion of everything foreign under every conceivable circumstance as part of Swadeshi. The broad definition of Swadeshi is the use of all home-made things to the exclusion of foreign things, in so far as such use is necessary for

the protection of home industries, more especially those industries without which India will become pauperized. In my opinion, therefore, Swadeshi which excludes the use of everything foreign because it is foreign, no matter how beneficial it may be, and irrespective of the fact that it impoverishes nobody, is a narrow interpretation of Swadeshi. Foreign drugs, therefore, where they are highly efficacious and not otherwise objectionable, I should use without the slightest hesitation; that is, if I did not object to drugs altogether. But there is no doubt that there is among many medical men with Western diploma a fashion, altogether harmful, of decrying Ayurvedic and Unani drugs, some of which are indeed of great potency and cheap withal. Any movement, therefore, on the part of those who have received a training in Western medicine to explore the possibilities of Ayurvedic and Unani systems would be most welcome and desirable.

The last question that this friend asks has been repeatedly answered in these pages: 'Are you against all machinery?' My answer is emphatically, 'No.' But I am against its indiscriminate multiplication. I refuse to be dazzled by the seeming triumph of machinery. I am uncompromisingly against all destructive machinery. But simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of the millions of cottagers I should welcome.

Young India, 17-6-1926

THE UNIVERSAL COTTAGE INDUSTRY

Babu Bijay Bihari Mukherjee of the Bengal Civil Service has published a booklet on the cottage industry of Bengal. It was awarded the Beereshwar Mitter Gold Medal of the Calcutta University. Whilst the conclusions of Babu Bijay Bihari are infirm, the facts he has set forth are well worth consideration by everyone who wishes well to this country. They derive greater importance from the fact that what is true of Bengal is true almost of all India.

> "In Bengal, according to the census of 1921, out of every 1,000 persons only 68 live in towns. Outside Calcutta and the metropolitan districts of Howrah, the 24 Parganas and Hoogly there are three towns containing over 30,000 people. . . . It will not, therefore, be unreasonable to hold that of 46,695,535 of the population of the British territory in Bengal scarcely more than about 13 lakhs of the people are urban and the rest live mainly in the villages."

Therefore the writer naturally contends:

> "To develop the village and to secure for its inhabitants that sufficiency of comforts which is essential even in a country where only a little suffices, to organize it as a living entity in the body politic of the constitution, is the crucial problem before the country. The utterance of Sir Horace Plunkett that 'we must have home before home rule' is true of Bengal as much as of Ireland to which he addressed it. One need not ignore the effect of the form of government and the need for a change in it to be convinced of the paramount and supreme necessity of attempts to rehabilitate the 'home' in

the villages. In that scheme of rehabilitation the cottage industry is not merely helpful but absolutely essential."

The author has no difficulty in showing that India was, at one time not very remote, happy and prosperous. He thus quotes Elphinstone: 'All the description of the parts of India visited by the Greeks give the idea of a country teeming with population and enjoying the highest degree of prosperity.' He has less difficulty in showing that the prosperity was mainly due to the one single industry of spinning and weaving. But today hand-spinning needs resurrection, and weaving, though still an important cottage industry, does not need the same attention.

Today there is no prosperity to note. Three-fourths of the people are dependent solely upon cultivation. In Dacca and Faridpur 92 % and in Midnapur 74 % of the cultivable land is now under cultivation. The average under cultivation per head of the agricultural population is respectively .72, .73 and .84 acres for the three districts. Thus there is little margin left for additional cultivation. And no peasantry that is solely dependent on agriculture can possibly live on less than one acre of land. The real average is far below the average given, because in the calculation are included huge tracts owned by rich zamindars. 'It is no wonder, therefore, that one of the highest officials of the Government had to declare that in this country half the people did not know what it was to have two meals a day.'

The seriousness of the situation was expressed by the Famine Commission so long ago as 1877-78 thus: 'A main cause of the disastrous consequences of Indian famines and one of the greatest difficulties in the way of providing relief in an effectual shape is to be found in the fact that the great mass of the people directly depend on agriculture, and that there is no other industry from which any considerable part

of the population derives support. The failure of the usual rains deprives the labouring class as a whole, not only of the ordinary supplies of food obtainable at prices within their reach but also of the *sole employment* by which they can earn the means of procuring it.' 'The complete remedy,' say the Commissioners, 'for this condition of things will be found only in the development of industries other than agriculture and independent of the fluctuations of the seasons.'

The writer shows too that the bulk of the peasantry is occupied only during four months of the year. 'The clerks, the officials, the lawyers, the doctors, the politicians, teachers and all who believe themselves educated in English do not come up even to one per cent of the population.' I have remarked that the writer is weak in his conclusions. The weakness, in my opinion, is derived from the fact that he has collected all possible cottage industries. As a recital it is good enough. But it does not solve the problem which needs a speedy solution. For the vast bulk of the population, as also the worker in the villages, a museum of industries is simply bewildering. They should have one universal industry. And by a process of exclusion one arrives at the irresistible conclusion that the only universal industry for the millions is spinning and no other. That does not mean that other industries do not matter or are useless. Indeed from the individual standpoint any other industry would be more remunerative than spinning. Watch-making will be no doubt a most remunerative and fascinating industry. But how many can engage in it? Is it of any use to the millions of villagers? But if the villagers can reconstruct their home, begin to live again as their forefathers did, if they begin to make good use of their idle hours, all else, all the other industries, will revive as a matter of course. It is no use putting before famishing men a multiplicity of raw foods and expecting them to make their choice. They would

not know what to do with them. They will probably rush after the most tempting and perish in the attempt. I remember once in my life being nearly lynched whilst I was distributing rations to famished people. I had to enclose and guard myself and the provisions before I could distribute what I had been given for distribution. We make little headway because we have an unclassified catalogue of industries for the people to choose, when we should know that there is only one industry it is possible to put before all. They may not all take it up. Let those who can and wish to, by all means, take up any other. But national resources must be concentrated upon the one industry of hand-spinning which all can take up now and besides which the vast majority can take up no other. And when the nation's attention is thus rivetted on its revival, we will not have to be in search of market for khaddar. The energy and money that have today to be devoted to popularizing khaddar will tomorrow be devoted to its greater manufacture and to its improvement. It is the national inertia that blinds us to the possibility of khaddar and thus paralyzes our capacity for a grand national effort. It is not enough to say that hand-spinning is one of the industries to be revived. It is necessary to insist that it is the central industry that must engage our attention if we are to re-establish the village home.

Young India, 30-9-1926

THE SAME OLD ARGUMENT

After reciting the evils from which we are suffering and after dealing with the improvements he would make in agriculture, a correspondent writes:

> "I think all these cannot be effected if we can stand back and say modern civilization is a disease. We have to face the disease boldly, and find out a remedy for eradicating the evils accruing therefrom. We have come to a stage of development when we cannot get out of this modern or satanic civilization. In this century of easy communication no country can live in isolation from another. Western influences are shaking the very fundamentals of our society in economic, social, religious and political matters. In this struggle I think all the silly, superstitious and secondary elements have to meet their destruction making way for the solid and essential things to remain. We cannot any longer be content with our bullock carts or old earthen lamps. We cannot escape the steamship, railways, motor cars printing presses, the ideas of democracy, of love and world brotherhood. Nobody thought that Japan would become such a powerful nation in the East. If she had shirked to take up modern methods of production, she would have been exactly where, for instance, China is at present asking for sympathy of other nations. Our aim must be to see to the healthy growth of India. This cannot be done by magic. We must have a larger income. The national income is pitifully low. English economists complain that a decent cultured life is not possible with a per capita income of less than £ 50; then what

about India? Unless we start industries able to withstand foreign competition, is it possible to increase the national dividend? We must have a favourable balance of trade for India, and then and then only can the Indian peasant be made to think of sanitation, education, decency, etc. India is living yet because she has hitherto adapted herself to changing conditions. This cannot be done without the introduction of machinery and large scale production."

This is the old argument restated. The correspondent forgets that to make India like England and America is to find some other races and places of the earth for exploitation. So far it appears that the Western nations have divided all the known races outside Europe for exploitation and that there are no new worlds to discover. Among the exploited, India is the greatest victim. Japan is taking the share of the spoils no doubt. But if India and China refuse to be exploited, what will happen to the exploiters? And if the Western nations plus Japan are likely to come to grief, in the event of India and China refusing to be exploited, what can be the fate of India trying to ape the West? Indeed the West has had a surfeit of industrialism and exploitation. If they who are suffering from the disease are unable to find a remedy to correct the evils, how shall we, mere novices, be able to avoid them? The fact is that this industrial civilization is a disease because it is all evil. Let us not be deceived by catchwords and phrases. I have no quarrel with steamships or telegraphs. They may stay, if they can, without the support of industrialism and all it connotes. They are not an end. We must not suffer exploitation for the sake of steamships and telegraphs. They are in no way indispensable for the permanent welfare of the human race. Now that we know the use of steam and electricity, we should be able to use them on due occasion and after we have

learnt to avoid industrialism. Our concern is, therefore, to destroy industrialism at any cost.

The correspondent has suggested the remedy without knowing it himself. For he admits that India has lived till now when other nations have perished because she has adapted herself to changing conditions. Adaptability is not imitation. It means power of resistance and assimilation. India has withstood the onslaughts of other civilizations because she has stood firm on her own ground. Not that she has not made changes. But the changes she has made have promoted her growth. To change to industrialism is to court disaster. The present distress is undoubtedly insufferable. Pauperism must go. But industrialism is no remedy. The evil does not lie in the use of bullock carts. It lies in our selfishness and want of consideration for our neighbours. If we have no love for our neighbours, no change however revolutionary can do us any good. And if we love our neighbours, the paupers of India, for their sake we shall use what they make for us; for their sake, we who should know shall not engage in an immoral traffic with the West in the shape of buying the foreign fineries and taking them to the villages.

If we would but think seriously and persistently, we shall discover that before we make any other changes the one great change to make is to discard foreign cloth and reinstate the ancient cottage industry of hand-spinning. We must thus restore our ancient and health-giving industry if we would resist industrialism.

I do not fight shy of capital. I fight capitalism. The West teaches one to avoid concentration of capital, to avoid a racial war in another and deadlier form. Capital and labour need not be antagonistic to each other. I cannot picture to myself a time when no man shall be richer than another. But I do picture to myself a time when the rich will spurn to enrich

themselves at the expense of the poor and the poor will cease to envy the rich. Even in a most perfect world, we shall fail to avoid inequalities, but we can and must avoid strife and bitterness. There are numerous examples extant of the rich and the poor living in perfect friendliness. We have but to multiply such instances.

India's destiny lies not along the bloody way of the West, of which she shows signs of tiredness, but along the bloodless way of peace that comes from a simple and godly life. India is in danger of losing her soul. She cannot lose it and live. She must not, therefore, lazily and helplessly say, 'I cannot escape the onrush from the West.' She must be strong enough to resist it for her own sake and that of the world.

Young India, 7-10-1926

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HAND-LOOM v. SPINNING WHEEL

It seems now to be generally recognized that India having more than 71 per cent of her population as agriculturists most of whom are idle for nearly six months in the year, needs a supplementary industry, and that that industry to be universal can only be hand-spinning becuase it is more remunerative and therefore a better proposition.

Now let us understand this argument in some detail. It is said that hand-weaving gives about eight annas per day as against one anna from hand-spinning. Therefore, if a person works for only two hours per day, he will earn from hand-weaving two annas against one pice in the same time from hand-spinning. It is added that one pice would be no economic attraction to anybody, and that if hand-weaving could be presented to the people, it would be wrong to ask them to do hand-spinning instead. The protagonists of the hand-loom contend further that there is no difficulty about getting as much mill-spun yarn as may be required for India's needs, and finally they say that even for the sake of keeping alive hand-weaving, which has hitherto defied the competition of weaving mills, it should be pushed with vigour and determination. Some of the protagonists of hand-weaving even go so far as to say that the hand-spinning movement is mischievous in that it turns people's attention away from the possible industry of hand-weaving and misleads them into supporting an impossible industry which has died of its own inherent weakness.

Let us test this specious-looking argument.

In the first instance, hand-weaving is not a practicable proposition as a supplementary industry,

because it is not easy to teach, it has never been universal in India, it requires several hands to work at, it cannot be done during odd moments. It has been and can only be generally an independent occupation and is in the majority of cases the sole occupation like shoe-making or smithy.

Moreover hand-weaving cannot be universal in the same sense that hand-spinning can be. India needs 4,661 million yards of cloth per year. A weaver weaves on an average three-quarters of a yard per hour of rough khaddar. Therefore, if all foreign indigenous or mill-made cloth could be excluded, at the most nine million weavers working at the rate of two hours per day would be required to produce the whole of our annual requirements. If it be contended that not so many weavers but so many families would be occupied, then the two annas for two hours would have to be distributed among many, thus materially reducing the earnings of the individual per day.

Now let us consider the possibilities of spinning. We know that it was at one time the universal supplementary industry of India. Millions have not yet forgotten the art, and tens of thousands have even now spinning wheels in their homes. Hand-spinning is, therefore, capable of immediate and limitless extension. And as it has been found that ten spinners supply one weaver, against nine million weavers ninety million spinners would be able to add to their earnings what to them will be a material income. I have assumed that very high figure of 40 rupees per year per head the average income. Unlike weaving, spinning may be interrupted any moment, and therefore it can be done during all odd moments. Spinning is learnt easily and quickly and the spinner begins to draw some thread from the very commencement.

Moreover it is wrong to rely upon an unfailing supply of mill yarn. Hand-weaving and mill-weaving

are not complementary propositions. They are mutually antagonistic, the tendency of weaving mills, like all machinery, always being to displace the product of the hand. If, therefore, hand-weaving could become a supplementary industry on a large scale, it would have to be solely dependent on mills which would naturally squeeze the last pie from the weaver for the supply of yarn and would scrap it at the first opportunity.

On the other hand, hand-spinning and hand-weaving are mutually complementary, as can be today proved from the experience of the existing spinning depots. Even as I write, I have letters from co-workers saying that in their centres they have to send away weavers for want of yarn.

It is little known that a vast number of weavers of mill yarn are in the hands of sowcars, and they must be, so long as they rely upon the mill product. The village economy demands that the weaver should receive his yarn not from the middlemen but from his fellow-worker the farmer.

Again so far as can be ascertained there are at present some twenty lakhs of weavers at work. Every additional loom means an outlay of at least Rs. 15. Every additional wheel need not mean more than Rs. 3½. The Khadi Pratisthan pattern costs only Rs. 2½. And at a pinch even an improvised takli, which need not cost anything, can be impressed into service.

Thus the spinning wheel appears to be the only foundation on which satisfactory village life can be constructed. It is the centre round which alone it is possible to build up village reorganization.

But it is said that one pice per two hours is no economic attraction to even the poor villager. In the first place, the wheel is not meant for, it is not now presented to, any person who has a more remunerative employment. How is it that thousands of women are today walking a few miles daily or weekly to receive

raw cotton and the few pice for the yarn they deliver? If a loom were suggested to them, they would not take it up, they would not have the time or the ability for it. Town-dwellers have no notion of the gnawing poverty of the masses of India. Let us not talk of the machine age in their case. The machinery of Manchester has robbed them of the butter to their bread which the wheel was, for it has been replaced by nothing else equal to it or better. For these, therefore, the spinning wheel is their only hope.

I do not here examine the more ambitious but chimerical proposals for agricultural improvements. There is room enough for them I have no doubt. But that is a matter of time and education, whereas the ever-growing poverty demands an immediate remedy which the wheel alone supplies. The wheel does not displace or disregard possibilities in the shape of such improvements. It is a prelude to them. Wherever it has gone, it is affecting the lives of villagers in a variety of ways, and it enables the townspeople to establish a living contact with the villagers and their villages.

'If hand-spinning is all you say, how is it that it has not already been universally adopted?' asks the critic. The question is quite fair. The answer is simple. The message of the wheel has to be carried to a people who have no hope, no initiative left in them, and who would, if left to themselves, starve and die rather than work and live. Such was not the case before, but long neglect has made laziness a habit with them. That laziness can only be removed by the living contact and example of men of character and industry plying the wheel before them and by gently showing them the way. The second great difficulty is the absence of a ready market for khaddar. I confess that it cannot for the time being compete with mill cloth. I will not engage in any such killing competition. The capitalist may for capturing the market sell his

calico for nothing. The manufacturer whose only capital is labour cannot afford to do so. Can there be any competition between the dead artificial rose however symmetrical it may be, and the living rose whose two petals will not be alike, or can there be any competition between a wax statue of Cromwell and the living one? Khaddar is a living thing. But India has lost her eye for the real art and is therefore satisfied with the glossy exterior. Revive the healthy national taste for khaddar and you will find every village a busy hive. As it is, the resources of khaddar organizations are taxed to the utmost, in order to create a market for the article. The marvel is that, in spite of heavy odds against it, the movement is making headway. Over twelve lacs worth of khaddar was sold only last year. But it is nothing to boast of when one thinks of what needs to be done.

I have thus summarized the case for the spinning wheel as a supplementary industry as against the hand-loom. Let there be no confusion of thought. I am not against the hand-loom. It is a great and thriving cottage industry. It will progress automatically if the spinning wheel succeeds. It is bound to die if the wheel fails.

I invite criticism of the argument, and shall gladly retrace my steps if the argument or the facts cannot be sustained.

Young India, 11-11-1926

'PROSPEROUS' INDIA

Mr. A. M. Samuel, Minister for Overseas Trade, is reported to have thus spoken to the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce:

"India is our best customer. She buys about £ 90,000,000 worth of goods from us a year, mostly manufactured goods of high finish containing a large amount of British labour. Any increase of trade with India, therefore, would be welcome because by increasing the employment of labour we would be carrying out the main policy of the present Government, namely the reduction of unemployment figures.

India bought from us immense quantities of iron and steel goods and railway material. She was prosperous and had large sums with which to purchase imported goods. She only awaited a level of prices which would suit her views. The credit of India stood very high, second only to the credit of Great Britain herself. Many firms in the Lincoln district already possess properly equipped sales and technical organizations in India, but the Government representatives in India asked firms to provide efficient and technical representation upon the spot. The sale of highly complex machinery and plant called for an increased backing up by technical advisers. The salesman needed a technical adviser at his right hand always to assist him in obtaining contracts. It was necessary that the British technical representatives should be in touch with the buying engineers in India to explain the details of the machines offered or sold. We still supplied 80 per cent of the machinery imported into India, and most of the British firms had their own technical agents in India, but he still came across reports of Indian purchasing authorities complaining that they did not get the services from the British expert staffs that

they desired. They also complained that we did not maintain an adequate supply in India of stocks and spare parts.

As regards the Indian market for agricultural machinery, he knew that British firms had gone to great trouble and expense to develop this market without any considerable success. The Indian Government, however, was striving to assist the Indian cultivator, and one of the best methods to do so was to put better agricultural implements into his hands. Agricultural and co-operative credit departments were being set up in India to show the people how to use and repair modern implements and to assist them to purchase them."

There is no doubt that Mr. Samuel honestly believes that we are prosperous, and that it would add to our prosperity to buy all the machinery that England can manufacture, whether agricultural or otherwise, as also technical skill. How far from truth both these statements appear to us to be! We know that India is not prosperous, that it is daily growing poorer, and some of us know also that the problem of poverty will never be solved by an indiscriminate importation of machinery and technical skill from England or any other foreign land. As Gokhale put it years ago, this kind of importation stunts our growth. We become more and more hewers of wood and drawers of water. What we need to do is to add to our capacity for labour with our hands and feet the necessry technical skill, so that we may devise our own machinery suitable to our requirements. A slavish imitation of the West can but kill all initiative or skill and therefore the capacity for living with anything like decent comfort. It is such speeches like Mr. Samuel's which arouse suspicions about the object of Commissions like the Royal Agricultural Commission, as was recently adverted to in these pages.

Young India, 16-12-1926

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BE IN TIME

The eventful month of April will be soon on us with its memories of the birth of the nation accompanied by unparalleled rejoicings in which lakhs upon lakhs of people took part and which showed the possibilities of what the nation, if it could only act with one mind, could do. It is a month which showed also what haughty, revengeful and merciless Imperialism could do to save itself. The 6th and the 13th of April are never-to-be-forgotten days in the life of the nation. Since then the nation has been struggling not to return evil for evil, not to act in a spirit of retaliation, but to use for self-purification the mingled crimson stream that flowed in Jallianwalla. The nation has been struggling to express itself in a non-violent spirit expressed by the spinning wheel and khadi, the removal of untouchability, and solidarity of the different sects and creeds. It is clear, however, that khadi is the only thing in which the whole nation can take part. If we want to act non-violently, we must act constructively, patiently, and with quiet and quenchless confidence. in ourselves and in our method. We must evolve unity, strength and iron discipline. We must learn to give effect to our views in spite of the vast odds against us. Let us realize that the British rule is imposed upon us because British commerce is forced upon us. If we could but purify British commerce, we would purify the British connection. Our commercial transactions with the British as with the world should be on our terms and should therefore be mutually beneficial and absolutely voluntary. But Lancashire cloth is a symbol of our helpless exploitation, whereas khadi is the symbol of

self-help, self-reliance, and freedom, not merely of individuals or groups, sects or clans, but of the whole nation. It is a movement in which the prince and the pauper, men and women, boys and girls, Hindus and Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis and Jews, Englishmen, Americans and Japanese, if they wish well to India and get rid of the spirit of exploitation, can also take part. Thus it is a unique movement. It is good not merely for some, not merely for a vast majority, but it is good for all. We may do many other and many more things during the forthcoming National Week. But let us at least organize khadi. Here are the ways:

1. We can, every one of us, buy as much khadi as we can.

2. We can sell as much khadi as we can.

3. We can spin as much yarn as we can.

4. We can give as much as we can to the All India Spinners' Association and collect from others.

5. Lastly, if we have the will and the opportunity, we can dedicate ourselves wholly to khadi work.

As I write this, the question arises in my own mind: 'But what about the immediate present? What about the Bengal detenues who are pining away in their prison cells without any knowledge of charge against them, without any trial and without knowing how long they are to be detained?' My answer, however, is quite clear. If I could think of any other more expeditious method of setting them free, I would adopt it and suggest it today; but there is not. Slow as this may seem, it is, in my humble opinion, the surest and the quickest method. Let those, therefore, who have belief in khadi or who have no belief in anything else, do their best bit during the National Week. A true soldier does not argue as he marches how success is going to be ultimately achieved. But he is confident that, if he only

plays his humble part well, somehow or other the battle will be won. It is in that spirit that every one of us should act. It is not given to us to know the future. But it is given to every one of us to know how to do our own part well. Let us then do that which we know is possible for us if we only will.

Young India; 10-2-1927

OUT OF NOTHING

When one thinks of the immense possibility of the charkha it is surprising that its simple message is taking so long to become universal. 'Nothing comes out of nothing,' says a Latin proverb. But the charkha would seem to falsify at least the letter of the proverb. For, without destroying or replacing anything useful, it seeks to utilize the waste and idle hours of the nation.

This idleness, whether it be regarded as enforced or voluntary, is killing the very soul of the nation. The more I penetrate the villages, the greater is the shock delivered as I perceive the blank stare in the eyes of the villagers I meet. Having nothing else to do but to work as labourers side by side with their bullocks, they have become almost like them. It is a tragedy of the first magnitude that millions have ceased to use their hands as hands. Nature is revenging herself upon us with terrible effect for this criminal waste of the gift she has bestowed upon us human beings. We refuse to make full use of the gift. And it is the exquisite mechanism of the hands that among a few other things separate us from the beast. Millions of us use them merely as feet. The result is that she starves both the body and the mind.

The spinning wheel alone can stop this reckless waste. It can do that now and without any extraordinary outlay of money or intelligence. Owing to this waste we are living in a state almost of suspended animation. It can be revived if only every home is again turned into a spinning mill and every village into a weaving mill. With it will at once revive the ancient

rustic art and the rustic song. A semi-starved nation can have neither religion nor art nor organization.

The only objection that has been urged by its critics is that the wheel does not pay. But even if it pays only one pice per day, it does pay when we remember that our average income is six pice per day against the fourteen rupees and six rupees per day respectively of the average American and the average Englishman. The spinning wheel is an attempt to produce something out of nothing. If we save sixty crores of rupees to the nation through the spinning wheel, as we certainly can, we add that vast amount to the national income. In the process we automatically organize our villages. And as almost the whole of the amount must be distributed amongst the poorest of the land, it becomes a scheme of just and nearly equal distribution of so much wealth. Add to this the immense moral value of such distribution, and the case for the charkha becomes irresistible.

Young India, 17-2-1927

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MILL-OWNERS AND KHADI

[At Amalner, for instance, a doubt was expressed as to the utility of carrying the message of khaddar to a mill area like that place. 'There are 2,000 labourers here, and they form the bulk of the population. Do you expect them to wear khadi? Do you expect the mill-owners to wear khadi?' Gandhiji gave the following lengthy reply. M. D.]

It is a question that you well may ask, and yet should not need to ask at this time of the day. Truth has to be repeated a million times if it is not understood by all. If only a single expression of truth was sufficient, everyone should have been a believer in God by now. The fact is that the truth that God is one has a million times been told, but the hearts of only a few have been able to receive it.

The 330 rupees that the labourers have contributed to the purse are for me worth their weight in gold. But it is not for the first time that labourers are giving concrete expression to their sympathy. Even the mill-owners have done so and will do so in the conviction that they are helping a good cause. The labourers are doing so because of their sympathy for a fellow labourer like myself. But an understanding of one's duty and the observance thereof are different things. If they went together, we should have *Ramarajya.* There are, for instance, those who know the value of brahmacharya but who cannot observe it. Even so there are those who appreciate the message of khadi but who are not able to conquer their love of ease and comfort and exclusively wear khadi. Many come and tell me: 'We value your message, but show us the way to carry it out.' And as honest

conviction is bound to be followed by practice sooner or later, this attitude fills me with more hope. You may be employing 2,000 labourers here, but do not forget that you tear them from the soil, do not forget that your mills can provide only a handful with labour, and can never find employment for the millions who must be rooted to the soil and who want more work. The question has been before the Royal Commission of Agriculture, the question is before the Viceroy, and I challenge anyone to find a better solution than the one I have placed before the country. Dr. Ray could not carry his chemical works to the famine areas in Bogra and Khulna; he had to fall back on the spinning wheels. Let not your ambition be to concentrate thousands of spindles in a mill, but to convert every home into a spinning mill.

Do I seek to destroy the mill industry, I have often been asked. If I did, I should not have pressed for the abolition of the excise duty. I want the mill industry to prosper—only I do not want it to prosper at the expense of the country. On the contrary, if the interests of the country demand that the industry should go, I should let it go without the slightest compunction. The mill-owners who support me understand my attitude, and many want this movement to prosper, even if its prosperity should mean their loss.

And you ask how those who produce mill cloth may wear anything else. Do you know that in Manchester the manufacturers do not wear their own products? You need not mind your inability to use cloth produced by your own mills. The good Duchess of Sutherland saw the miserable plight of the poor islanders of Hebrides and placed spinning wheels and looms at their disposal. The citizens of Manchester, including mill-owners, do wear the hand-spun stuffs prepared by the Hebrides people, even at three times the cost of the mill stuff.

Do not hanker after cheapness and fineness. If you want cheap and fine stuffs, you must spin fine yarn as the late Jogesh Chatterji did, or you must spend more money for it. Those who talk of Swaraj cannot have both cheapness and fineness. Think of the sacrifices that Lokamanya made and expected of you. Think of the sacrifices all fighters have to make. In Queen Elizabeth's time heavy duties were imposed on foreign stuffs and heavy penalties were prescribed for the purchase of Holland laces. Am I asking for much when I ask you to remember your poor, and purchase their khadi ? Do not you say that you will maintain the poor on charity. Only two classes of people are entitled to charity and no one else—the Brahman who possesses nothing and whose business it is to spread holy learning, and the cripple and the blind. But at Jagannath-Puri the iniquitous system of giving doles to the able-bodied idle is going on to our eternal shame and humiliation, and it is to wipe out that shame that I am going about with the message of the charkha up and down the whole country.

Young India, 24-2-1927

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NO AND YES

'Comrade' Saklatwala is dreadfully in earnest. His sincerity is transparent. His sacrifices are great. His passion for the poor is unquestioned. I have therefore given his fervent open appeal to me that close attention which that of a sincere patriot and humanitarian must command. But in spite of all my desire to say 'yes' to his appeal, I must say 'no', if I am to return sincerity for sincerity or if I am to act according to my faith. But I can say 'yes' to his appeal after my own fashion. For underneath his intense desire that I should co-operate with him on his terms, there is the emphatic implied condition that I must say 'yes' only if his argument satisfies my head and heart. A 'no' uttered from deepest conviction is better and greater than a 'yes' merely uttered to please or, what is worse, to avoid trouble.

In spite of all the desire to offer hearty co-operation, I find myself against a blind wall. His facts are fiction, and his deductions based upon fiction are necessarily baseless. And where these facts are true, my whole energy is concentrated upon nullifying their (to me) poisonous results. I am sorry, but we do stand at opposite poles. There is, however, one great thing in common between us. Both claim to have the good of the country and humanity as our only goal. Though, therefore, we may for the moment seem to be going in opposite directions, I expect we shall meet some day. I promise to make ample amends when I discover my error. Meanwhile, however, my error, since I do not recognize it as such, must be my shield and my solace.

For, unlike 'Comrade' Saklatwala, I do not believe that multiplication of wants and machinery contrived to supply them is taking the world a single step nearer its goal. 'Comrade' Saklatwala swears by the modern rush. I whole-heartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction. If modern civilization stands for all this, and I have understood it to do so, I call it satanic and with it the present system of Government, its best exponent. I distrust its schemes of amelioration of the lot of the poor, I distrust its currency reform, I distrust its army and navy. In the name of civilization and its own safety this Government has continuously bled the masses, it has enslaved the people, it has bribed the powerful with distinctions and riches, and it has sought to crush under the weight of its despotic regulations the liberty-loving patriots who would not be won over either by flattery or riches. I would destroy that system today, if I had the power. I would use the most deadly weapons, if I believed that they would destroy it. I refrain only because the use of such weapons would only perpetuate the system though it may destroy its present administrators. Those who seek to destroy men rather than their manners adopt the latter and become worse than those whom they destroy under the mistaken belief that the manners will die with the men. They do not know the root of the evil.

The movement of 1920 was designed to show that we could not reform the soulless system by violent means, thus becoming soulless ourselves, but we could do so only by not becoming victims of the system, i. e. by non-cooperation, by saying an emphatic 'no' to every advance made to entrap us into the nets spread by Satan.

That movement suffered a check but is not dead. My promise was conditional. The conditions were

simple and easy. But they proved too difficult for those who took a leading part in the movement.

What 'Comrade' Saklatwala believes to be my error and failure I regard to be the expression of my strength and deep conviction. It may be an error, but so long as my conviction that it is truth abides, my very error must, as it does, sustain me. My retracing my steps at Bardoli I hold to be an act of wisdom and supreme service to the country. The Government is the weaker for that decision. It would have regained all lost position if I had persisted after Chauri Chaura in carrying out the terms of what was regarded as an ultimatum to the Viceroy.

My 'Comrade' is wrong in saying that the South African movement was a failure. If it was, my whole life must be written down as a failure. And his invitation to me to enlist under his colours must be held to be meaningless. South Africa gave the start to my life's mission. Nor do I consider it to be wrong to have offered, during the late war, the services of my companions and myself, under my then convictions, as ambulance men.

This great M. P. is in a hurry. He disdains to study facts. Let me inform him that the khadi movement is not on the wane. It did last year at least twenty times as much work as during 1920. It is now serving not less than 50,000 spinners in 1,500 villages, besides weavers, washermen, printers, dyers and tailors.

Mr. Saklatwala asks what khaddar stands for. Well, it stands for simplicity, not shoddiness. It sits well on the shoulders of the poor, and it can be made, as it was made in the days of yore, to adorn the bodies of the richest and the most artistic men and women. It is reviving ancient art and crafts. It does not seek to destroy all machinery but it does regulate its use and check its weedy growth. It uses machinery for the service of the poorest in their own cottages. The wheel is itself an exquisite piece of machinery.

Khaddar delivers the poor from the bonds of the rich and creates a moral and spiritual bond between the classes and the masses. It restores to the poor somewhat of what the rich have taken from them.

Khaddar does not displace a single cottage industry. On the contrary it is being daily recognized that it is becoming the centre of other village industries. Khaddar brings a ray of hope to the widow's broken-up home. But it does not prevent her from earning more if she can. It prevents no one from seeking a better occupation. Khaddar offers honourable employment to those in need of some. It utilizes the idle hours of the nation. The esteemed 'Comrade' quotes with pride the work of those who offer more lucrative employment. Let him know that khaddar does that automatically. It cannot put annas into the pockets of the poor without putting rupees into the pockets of some. Whereas those who begin their work in the cities, though they are no doubt doing good work, touch but the fringe of the question. Khaddar touches the very centre and therefore necessarily includes the rest.

But the whole of the impatient communist's letter concentrates itself upon the cities and thus ignores India and Indian conditions which are to be found only in her 700,000 villages. The half a dozen modern cities are an excrescence and serve, at the present moment, the evil purpose of draining the life-blood of the villages. Khaddar is an attempt to revise and reverse the process and establish a better relationship between the cities and the villages. The cities with their insolent torts are a constant menace to the life and liberty of the villagers.

Khaddar has the greatest organizing power in it because it has itself to be organized and because it affects all India. If khaddar rained from heaven, it would be a calamity. But as it can only be manufactured by the willing co-operation of starving millions and thousands of middle class men and women, its

success means the best organization conceivable along peaceful lines. If cooking had to be revived and required the same organization, I should claim for it the same merit that I claim for khaddar.

My communist comrade finds fault with my work among the labourers in Jamshedpur because I accepted an address in Jamshedpur not from the Tatas but from the employees. His disapprobation is due, I expect, to the fact that the late Mr. Ratan Tata was in the chair. Well, I am not ashamed of the honour. Mr. Tata appeared to me to be a humane and considerate employer. He readily granted, I think, all the prayers of the employees, and I heard later that the agreement was being honourably kept. I do ask and receive donations for my work from the rich as well as the poor. The former gladly give me their donations. This is no personal triumph. It is the triumph of non-violence which I endeavour to represent, be it ever so inadequately. It is to me a matter of perennial satisfaction that I retain generally the affection and the trust of those whose principles and policies I oppose. The South Africans gave me personally their confidence and extended their friendship. In spite of my denunciation of British policy and system I enjoy the affection of thousands of Englishmen and women, and in spite of unqualified condemnation of modern materialistic civilization, the circle of European and American friends is ever widening. It is again a triumph of non-violence.

Lastly about labour in the cities. Let there be no misunderstanding. I am not opposed to organization of labour, but, as in everything else, I want its organization along Indian lines or, if you will, my lines. I am doing it. The Indian labourer knows it instinctively. I do not regard capital to be the enemy of labour. I hold their co-ordination to be perfectly possible. The organization of labour that I undertook in South Africa, Champaran or Ahmedabad was

in no spirit of hostility to the capitalists. The resistance in each case and to the extent it was thought necessary was wholly successful. My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see it is not to be realized. I therefore work for equitable distribution. This I seek to attain through khaddar. And since its attainment must sterilize British exploitation at its centre, it is calculated to purify the British connection. Hence in that sense khaddar leads to Swaraj.

The Mahatma I must leave to his fate. Though a non-cooperator I shall gladly subscribe to a bill to make it criminal for anybody to call me Mahatma and to touch my feet. Where I can impose the law myself, i. e. at the Ashram, the practice is criminal.

Young India, 17-3-1927

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THE RATNAGIRI SPEECH

After describing Ratnagiri as a place of pilgrimage for the whole of India, as it was Lokamanya's birth place, Gandhiji said:

You know Lokamanya's Swaraj *Mantra*. I do not think there has been any follower of Lokamanya who has tried to carry out the *mantra* more than I. There may be many whose efforts are equal to mine, but no one can claim to have put forth greater effort. For I know that not only is Swaraj our birthright, but that it is our sacred duty to win it. For in so far as we are removed from Swaraj we are removed from manhood. A proper manifestation of all our powers is impossible without Swaraj. And the Swaraj that Lokamanya had in view was not the Swaraj for Ratnagiri people or for Maharashtris, but for the whole of India, poor as well as rich. And Swaraj has no meaning for the poor unless they have enough to eat. Why should we not serve our mills, you ask. Sheth Narottam Morarji, the owner of the Sholapur Mills, is a friend of mine, and I was the guest of his son who showered his affection on me. But does that mean that I must use cloth from the Sholapur Mills and serve that 'poor' Sheth Narottam and his son? Even they will not say that I would be serving the poor by using their cloth.

I have been told everywhere that Konkan is poor. If you are poor, the situation must be unbearable for you. You say that poor people from your parts go to Bombay and earn a living there. Do you know the price that they have to pay for that living? They live in hovels without light and air, a few feet by a few feet, where several men and women are huddled together without regard for their bodily cleanliness or decency. Are you ready to send your mothers and

sisters to live under such conditions? Do you not agree that the women that go to the Bombay mills are your mothers and sisters and the men your brothers? Are you prepared to see your brothers and sisters take to a life of drunkenness and shame and return home and spread the infection of their vices? Is it worth while paying this terrible price for the eight annas they manage to earn there?

Our cattle are destroyed because we do not know true cow protection, and our villages are ruined because we do not know true economics and sociology. The charkha can stop that ruinous process. Do you know the daily income per head of our country? Our economists say that it is one anna and six pies, though even that is misleading. If someone were to work out the average depth of a river as four feet from the fact that the river was six feet deep in certain places and two feet in others, and proceeded to ford it, would he not be drowned? That is how statistics mislead. The average income is worked out from the figures of the income of the poor man as also of the Viceroy and the millionaires. The actual income will, therefore, be hardly three pice per head. Now if I supplement that income by even three pice with the help of the charkha, am I not right in calling the charkha my cow of plenty? Some people attribute superhuman powers to me, some say I have an extraordinary character. God alone knows what I am. It is also possible to disagree about the efficacy of satyagraha, but I do not think there is any reason for disagreement on these obvious facts about the charkha. If someone convinces me today that there is no poverty in India, that there are few in India who starve for want of even a few pice a day, I shall own myself to have been mistaken and shall destroy the spinning wheel.

I ask you, therefore, to bear in mind what you mean when you say that Konkan is poor. If you are

really poor, there is nothing like the wheel which can cure your impoverishment and which is a safeguard for the honour of your women. Seek ye first the charkha and its concomitants, and everything else will be added unto you. How can you disregard a thing which is of such a national and universal character? Does it behove the followers of Lokamanya to deride or reject the wheel?

But you will ask, as a youth who sought to heckle me asked, 'If Lokamanya liked this thing, why did he not ask the country to take it up?' Well, I cannot be taken in by your question. Whether or not Lokamanya had khadi in mind when he defined Swadeshi, surely his Swadeshi cannot but include khadi. I am but the heir of Lokamanya, and if I do not add to the patrimony he has left me, I would not be a worthy son of a worthy father. I pondered well over Lokamanya's message, applied my many years' experience to it, and came to the conclusion that Lokamanya's message must mean khadi. Do you know what he used to do? I am telling you of an incident that happened a short time before his death. When Maulana Shaukatali approached him as regards the Khilafat question, Lokamanya said to him: 'I shall put my signature to whatever Gandhi signs for I trust to his better knowledge in this matter.' Supposing, therefore, Lokamanya had not khadi in mind when he advised Swadeshi, what does it matter? Supposing we were manufacturing spectacles here and someone were to say, 'We cannot use them, Lokamanya did not advise the use thereof,' would it be proper? We would dismiss him as a literalist, *Vedavadarata* as Gita would describe him. As the literalist interpreter of the Vedas does not grasp the infinite meaning of the Vedas, even so these literalist interpreters of Lokamanya's message miss its infinite power.

But someone comes and says, 'When Mussalmans are converting us who is going to listen to your khadi?'

Have you, I ask, become so impotent that you will be Mussalmans because someone compels you to embrace Islam? If you have true *dharma* in you, no one dare violate it. But I want to protect even our *dharma* by means of khadi. For khadi means the service not only of Hindu but of Mussalman women. A Maulvi in Bengal went and asked some of those women not to spin on the ground that the khadi movement was a Hindu movement. They listened to him for a couple of days, but the third day they came asking for cotton. For what could they do? They could not go on starving, and the Maulvi had no food to offer them. The learned author of the Mahabharata has described Vishvamitra the sage as ready to eat what was forbidden to him and even to steal when he was oppressed by the pangs of hunger. One cannot say what a hungry man or woman would not stoop to. I therefore tell you that you must take to khadi, if only to alleviate the poverty and safeguard the honour of your women.

I am asked to take part in the Shuddhi movement. How can I, when I wish that its Muslim and Christian counterparts should also cease? It is unthinkable that a man will become good or attain salvation only if he embraces a particular religion—Hinduism, Christianity or Islam. Purity of character and salvation depend on the purity of heart. I therefore say to the Hindus, 'Do whatever you like, but don't ask a man like me, who has come to his conclusion after the maturest thinking, to take up what he cannot.' Man's capacity is after all limited. I can do what is within my power, not what is beyond it. I cannot do a hundred or even half a dozen things at a time. I would think myself blessed even if I can do one thing well at a time. If you agree with me that the charkha is the best Sangathan that is possible, give me as much help as you can render.

Young India, 17-3-1927

THE WHEEL OF LIFE AND THE VEDAS

Pandit Satavalekar of Aundh wrote in 1922 a booklet in Hindi called वेदमें चर्खा, i. e. *Charkha in the Vedas*, and favoured me with a copy whilst I was resting in the Yeravda Jail. I glanced then through its pages and with interest, but asked myself what good would it be to us in this age of so-called advancement to know that the charkha was to be found in the Vedas. Everybody knows that our remote ancestors spun and wove in their cottages even as they did so many other things. But we no longer do them. So I said to myself. The booklet, I hastily concluded, was not of much practical value, and I laid it aside. On the sick-bed I have again an opportunity of turning, so far as my strength permits, to quiet studies. Another book of Pandit Satavalekar (of which more hereafter) has attracted me to his writings, and he has now favoured me with another copy of the booklet in question. I observe that it has undergone a second edition. I have read it this time more carefully, and I find that the *mantras* cited by the author from the Vedas demonstrate not merely the fact that our ancestors in those times were spinning and weaving, but they present, perhaps, for us, a novel way of looking at the wheel. Here is what may be called the key *mantra* for spinners and weavers from Rig-Veda X, 53-6 quoted by the author. I give a free rendering as follows :

> " Having spun the thread and given it a shining colour, weave it without knots, and so guard the pathways which the enlightened have chalked out, and thinking well, lead posterity unto the divine Light, or (according to the author's rendering) bring

> forth divine progeny. This truly is the work of poets."

If the translation is at all correct — and the author has not merely given his own rendering but has reproduced Griffith's translation also in his booklet —, the *mantra* proves not merely the existence of spinning in the Vedic times, but that it was the calling of the noblest men and women as well as of the humblest. It was one of the pathways which wisdom hath prepared and to guard which was the work of poets. Little did I know, when I humbly presented the charkha to our Poet as a sacrificial rite, that I had behind me the authority of what is understood to be the oldest Veda. I commend the *mantra* to all those who are engaged in reviving this ancient and sacred industry and art. Let them thoughtfully recite this *mantra* whilst doing their sacrificial spinning. Let them treasure it in their hearts and keep their faith unshaken even in the face of disappointments and reverses in their forward march.

I cannot resist quoting another beautiful *mantra* from the booklet. This is again from the Rig-Veda X,130-1. It means:

> "Hundred and one artists are working at the sacrifice which through the myriad threads overspreads the earth. Here are the elderly guardians. They watch the processes saying, 'Weave on here, do this right there.'"

Thus we see that spinning and weaving was regarded as a sacrifice even in those ancient days and commanded the protecting care of the elders. The author shows by abundant evidence that spinning and weaving were done by men as well as women. In fact the industry was as universal as farming. He shows too that the sartorial art was well advanced in those times. There were different dresses prescribed for different occasions as also for different states. If the farmer had his *langoti*, royalty had its robes. There is

mention of colours, fringes and gold borders. The author has also shown that some of the most beautiful metaphors have been taken from the language of spinners and weavers.

I must resist the temptation to quote more extracts from this thoughtfully written booklet. There is a *mantra* which proves that the soldiers of those days were not above doing these processes, and that the bridegroom's garment was always made by the bride as is still the custom in Assam.

There is one thing, however, which the author leaves to other research scholars in the Vedic lore to discover. So far as he has been able to study the Vedas, he has not found a single equivalent for cotton as he has for wool and silk. He is, therefore, unable to say whether in those days our ancestors had only woollen and silken garments or whether they had already discovered the cotton fibre.

Young India, 2-6-1927

LANCASHIRE BLOCK

The long delay which took place in the publication of the Tariff Board report was almost a certain indication of the rejection of any recommendation for granting further protection to the great mill industry. The Government will not offend Japan by discriminating against it and favouring Lancashire. And it dare not displease Lancashire by applying it any protective duty. For Lancashire is the Government in substance; and to grant India effective protection against Lancashire would be almost like committing suicide.

This question of protection for the mill industry against Lancashire and other foreign competition is a question of life and death for India as it is supposedly one of life and death also for Lancashire. To realize the truth of this statement one has merely to look at the table of imports. Imports from Lancashire are by far the largest of all the other imports, nearly half of all British imports. Lancashire has risen on the ashes of India's greatest cottage industry, and it is sustained by the exploitation of the helpless millions of this land. The indigenous mill industry is really regarded as an interloper, and if it could be decently squashed in the interest of Lancashire, it would be suppressed without ceremony. The stupendous interest of Lancashire is allowed to override every moral consideration. The existence of that industry harms both Lancashire and India. It has reduced India to pauperism, and India's pauperism reduces Lancashire to moral bankruptcy.

The mill-owners of India will never be able to vindicate their position in the face of this almost

insurmountable obstacle, unless they courageously make common cause with the people and force protection from the Government. It is the country's right. If a country has the right to determine the composition of its inhabitants and to exclude those whom it considers to be detrimental to its existence, it has a greater right to determine the composition of the goods that it would permit to be imported within its borders and to exclude those that it may consider to be harmful to its population.

There can be no doubt that foreign cloth is the most harmful among all our imports. The mill industry may for a time flourish somehow, it may also show a temporary prosperity by various manipulations or by favourable accidents; but unless it secures effective protection against all foreign cloth, it is bound to go under sooner or later, and certainly much sooner than one expects. Some day or other there is bound to be a real sustained mass awakening, whether mad and undisciplined but organized in its own madness, or (as I hope) disciplined and organized non-violently. And when it comes the indigenous mill industry, unless it is recognized as their own by the masses, will perish in the flame that must overtake foreign cloth. It is time for the mill-owners to make common cause with khadi and wrest protection from an unwilling Government. There is room enough for years to come for both, if the province of each is now marked out and rigidly respected. It is then possible for them to prosper in spite of Government aloofness and even insidious opposition. But this presupposes intelligent sacrifice on the part of the mill-owners, a vital combination amongst them, and an iron determination to carry through their programme.

I was glad to notice an authoritative repudiation of the rumour that a cut in the wages of the mill-hands was contemplated as a reply to the Government's decision. It would have been suicidal. What is wanted

at this time is not antagonizing labour, but making common cause with labour and regarding mill-hands as much proprietors of the mills as the shareholders and agents. If the shareholders supply the capital, the labourers supply the muscle for the conversion of capital into cloth. A combination, therefore, between the mill-owners, the mill-hands and the masses would be an irresistible combination which the Government dare not ignore. Will the mill-owners have enough foresight, courage and patriotism for the task? The 1 s. 6 d. ratio, it was contended (with a great degree of force in the contention), was a hit against that great industry and a gift to Lancashire. The resolution on the Tariff Board report is another such hit and therefore another gift to Lancashire. I wonder whether this last hit will stir the mill-owners to right action. No petition, no resolution in the Legislative Assembly will be of any use unless it is backed by effective mass action, and, in my humble opinion, it is not possible to conceive of any milder mass action than I have ventured to suggest.

Young India, 23-6-1927

CULTURAL SPINNING

An English friend sends me a cutting from *The Scotsman* of 21st April. It is entitled "Value of Rhythm". It is an account of a spinning demonstration at the Easter Conference held at Edinburgh under the auspices of the Institute of Handicraft Teachers. Dr. John Gunn presided at the meeting. The lecture demonstration was given by Mr. William Kirkness F. S. A. (Scot.) I quote below verbatim the interesting report from *The Scotsman* :

> "Spinning and weaving, said Mr. Kirkness, had from earliest times been one of the most important domestic occupations. Penelope and the maid Arachne he cited as classical instances of early spinners, and he traced the history of the craft from prehistoric times, when man, imitating the action of the wind, had learnt to make thread. He showed how the distaff and the spinning wheel were gradually evolved, and demonstrated the various processes of teasing and carding and preparing the wool for weaving. Skeins of knitting wool were next produced and the stages of hand-weaving shown, the lecturer demonstrating personally the working of the different hand-looms which he had assembled on platform.
>
> Weaving, said Mr. Kirkness, had long been established in schools, but spinning, to the best of his knowledge, had never been properly explored. He spoke of his own experiments in this direction carried on over a period of years. His first class had consisted of three girls of thirteen, and they had found spinning difficult. A simpler system had been worked out by which girls of seven could be taught. He spoke highly of the value of spinning in the

education of temperamental children. Invariably he had found that spinning settled them, and he quoted the opinion of a doctor that in the case of nervous children it was curative.

At this point Mr. Kirkness's class came on to the platform, and seated each at the spinning wheel which she herself had chosen to work with in school, commenced the rhythmic movements which, so far from being fatiguing, are rather recreative in effect. Two of the girls had suffered from sleeping sickness, and they were all children who, for temperamental or other reasons, had been unable to profit fully by the normal school curriculum. With regard to the choice of spinning wheels, it was observed that the one with the slowest motion was selected by the least energetic of the girls, while the one with the quickest tread had been çhosen by the child who had the most difficulty in sitting still.

In a plea for the inclusion of spinning among handicrafts taught in all schools, Mr. Kirkness said that spinning had been part of every woman's domestic equipment until within a hundred years ago. Its rhythm was a highly desirable and satisfactory feature of muscular movement, and very fragile people work hours longer when their movements were rhythmic.

Dr, Drever, who took part in the discussion which followed, said that there was no doubt that Mr. Kirkness had put his finger on the value of a first rate occupation for the education of a certain type of child. He was also right in his contentions as to the general educational value of the work."

Young India, 4-8-1927

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"HUMAN SPIDER OF MAJORCA"

I am indebted to Shri C. Balajirao of Coimbatore for the following interesting press clipping:

"In the shadow of the Cathedral by the sea at Palm de Mallorca — so near the sea that it might have inspired Debussy's 'Engloutie' — he moves to and fro all day for twelve hours, weaving as he goes, throwing out his single thread behind him. He is so dexterous that he spins a yard of thread every second, so that in a minute and a half he has left behind him more than a hundred yards of thread.

"His craft seems simple, yet how impossible of achievement to one who has not been handed down the instinct of the spinner, as it was handed down to him, through fifteen generations. At his waist, swathed round and round his body until he looks like a walking cocoon, he carries a bundle of grassy fibre, like fine hair. He hitches a little of it to the centre of a rough heel and walks slowly away from it. The wheel turns slowly under the hand of his infant son, who gazes across the azure sea, dreaming of the ships on which he will never be able to sail; for he too belongs to the long generations of human spiders.

"As the spinner walks in the sun his fingers play amid his cocoon, like the delicate fingers of a violinist on the strings, and there comes from him, miraculously, a line of fine twine, attaching him to the revolving wheel, growing with such speed as he moves away that he seems to be performing the old conjuring trick of producing interminable ribbon from a hat.

"He and his ancestors have been spinning here in the open air for five hundred years. From the shadow of the cathedral his ancestor saw more than once the

dreaded sails on the sky-line warning them of the approach of Barbary pirates. They saw, too, the galleys of the defeated Moors lurking round the coast, seeking in vain to recapture the island which had once been one of the seats of their power.

"If you ask him how he spins thread so miraculously with his fingers, he shrugs his shoulders, and his dark face smiles at you. He can scarcely tell; he scarcely knows himself. He cannot teach you his craft, any more than a spider can teach a clumsy beetle how to make a web. It is a craft to which he was born.

"'I knew it,' he tells you, 'when I was so young that I could say no more than twenty words, even before I had much skill in walking. It is simple. See.'

"He calls a still smaller son, who comes with the uncertain steps of early childhood, and, taking a bundle of the yellow fibre from his father, walks with minute but unfaltering steps away from the turning wheel, frowningly intent on his cocoon. His small, fat fingers are busy in the soft mass, and from it he produces a twine as his father had done; a rougher, less expert twine, but one with which any man might tether his mule or hang himself. And the father watches, brighteyed with pride for the infant spinner."

Young India, 12-4-1928

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A SPEECH AT THE Y. M. C. A., MADRAS

A Religious Discourse

The Chairman has asked me to give you a religious discourse. I do not know that I have ever given a religious discourse, or to put it the other way, I do not know a single speech of mine or a talk of mine, within my own recollection, which has not been a religious discourse. I think, if I am not deceived, that at the back of every word that I have uttered since I have known what public life is, and of every act that I have done, there has been a religious consciousness and a downright religious motive. My acts may have appeared to my audiences or to the readers of the word that I have written political, economical and many other things. But I ask you to accept my word that the motive behind every one of them has been essentially and predominantly religious. And so is it to be this morning.

When I asked what I was expected to speak about, I was told that I was to speak what I liked. Well, the message came to me this morning as I was on my way to this meeting, and I propose now to think before you aloud.

I had very precious moments with a missionary friend in Vellore. I had a heart to heart talk with the students of that place, and the next morning I was told something like this: "Your speech was very nice. You talked of the things of the spirit. But how is it that in the middle of the speech, like King Charles' head with the renowned Mr. Dick, khadi came up? Can you explain what connection khadi can possibly have with spirituality?" Then he went on, "You spoke about temperance; that delighted us

and it was certainly spiritual. You spoke about untouchability, a very fine subject for an audience spiritually inclined or for a spiritually inclined man to speak about. But both these came in your speech after your message of khadi. It seemed to jar on some of us." I have given you the substance of the conversation in my own words but faithfully. I gave the answer that came to me at the time, and this morning I want to amplify that answer.

Spinning Supremely a Spiritual Message

It is quite true that I place khadi first and then only untouchability and temperance. All these came at the end of the speech I gave to the students of Vellore, in which I made a fervent appeal for purity of life, and told them that without purity of life all their learning would be as dust and probably a hindrance to the true progress of the world. Then I took up these three things and a few more by way of illustration. Throughout 35 years' unbroken experience of public service in several parts of the world, I have not yet understood that there is anything like spiritual or moral value apart from work and action. I have often repeated to audiences like this that great verse which has always remained with me ever since I read it: "Not everyone that says unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven but he who doeth the will of my Father who is in Heaven." I have not reproduced that verse correctly, but you know what that verse is, and it is so true. I recall to my mind two brilliant instances of men in English public life who, in their own times, were regarded as very great reformers, and as pillars of spirituality. I am now talking to you of about 1889 and 1890 when many of you were not born. I used to attend temperance meetings in those days. I was interested in that reform. These two pillars of spirituality were supposed to be great temperance

workers, but they were workers with their speeches. They were always in demand when a harangue was required on temperance. I am sorry to have to inform you that I was a witness to their fall. Both of them were found out. They were no workers. The words God, Lord, Jehovah were on their lips always, but they simply adorned their lips, they were not in their hearts. They used the temperance platform for their own base ends. One of them was a speculator and the other was a moral leper. Perhaps you now understand what I want to say. In India also I am not able to say that the temperance platform is always a spiritual platform or that the platform of untouchability must necessarily be a spiritual platform. I have known, I know now as I am talking to you, that both these platforms are being abused today in this very land by several people. Others are using them aright. The moral I want to submit to you is that every act may be done, conceived and presented from a spiritual standpoint, or it may have none of it at all. I want to claim before you today that the message of the spinning wheel and khadi is supremely a spiritual message; and it is because it is supremely a spiritual message for this land that it has got tremendous economic consequences as also political consequences.

Economics and Religion

Only the other day an American friend, Prof. Sam Higginbotham, writing to me upon a subject in which both he and I are deeply interested, said — I give you the substance of the letter —"I don't believe in religion bereft of economics. Religion to be worth anything must be capable of being reduced when necessary to terms of economics." I entirely endorse that remark with a big mental reservation. Not that Mr. Higginbotham also had not that reservation. But I must not claim to speak for him. The mental reservation is this that, whereas religion to be worth anything must be capable

of being reduced to terms of economics, economics to be worth anything must also be capable of being reduced to terms of religion or spirituality. Therefore in this scheme of religion *cum* economics there is no room for exploitation and for Americanization as the technical term is known. As a distinguished son of India put it — he is no other than Sir M. Vishveshvarayya — whereas an Englishman owns 30 slaves — or is it 36, I speak subject to correction — an American owns 33 slaves. Personally I think there is no room in true economics, which is convertible with religion, for the owning of slaves whether they are human beings, cattle or machinery. There is no room for slavery in economics. Then I suggest to you that you cannot escape khadi, and it has the largest limit. Temperance takes in its orbit a certain number of people. It blesses the man who converts the drunkard to teetotalism, and it undoubtedly blesses the drunkard who is so converted by the word of the reformer. Untouchability takes in its orbit at the most seven crores of people of this unhappy land, and not every one of us can do untouchability work. You may certainly give the untouchable education; you may dig wells for him and build temples. But these would not make him touchable unless the so-called touchables will come down from their insolent heights and brother the untouchable. So you will see it is a somewhat complex problem for the man and woman in the street to handle. And as a man whose sole occupation in life is, be it ever so humble, to find out truth, I was searching for something that everyone can do without exception — everybody in this room — that something which would also remedy the most deep-seated disease of India.

The Orbit of Khadi

And the most deep-seated disease of India is undoubtedly not drunkenness, undoubtedly not untouchability, great as these diseases are and greater perhaps

for those who are suffering from them; but when you examine the numerical content of this disease you will find with me, if you take any census returns or any authentic book on history, such for instance as Sir William Hunter's history, or take the evidence of Mr. Higginbotham given before a Commission only two years ago — he said that the largest number of people in India were poverty-stricken, and Sir William Hunter says that one-tenth of the population in India is living barely on one meal a day consisting of a stale *roti* and a pinch of dirty salt which perhaps you and I will not touch — that state of things persists in India today. If you were to go into the interior, outside the railway track, you will find, as I have found, that the villages are being reduced to dung-heaps, the villagers are not there — vultures are to be seen — because they could not support themselves, and were reduced to carcasses.

India is suffering from menengitis, and if you will perform the necessary operation and make some return to those starving millions today, I say there is nothing but khadi for you. And if, as men spiritually inclined, you will think of those less fortunate than you are and who have not even enough to support themselves or clothe themselves, if you will have an indissoluble bond between them and yourselves, I say once more there is nothing for you but khadi. But it jars, and the reason why it jars is that this is a new thing and is a visionary thing, a day-dream as it appears to many. The missionary friend of Vellore, of whom I spoke just now, told me at the end of our conversation, "Yes, but can you stem the march of modern progress? Can you put back the hands of the clock, and induce people to take to your khadi and make them work on a mere pittance?" All I could say is that this friend did not know his India. From the Vellore meeting I went to two places, Arcot and Arni. I did not see much of the people there, I assure you, but saw the

villagers less well clad than I am. I saw them not in their tens but in their tens of thousands. They were in their rags, and their wages were practically nil for four months in the year. They gave me of their substance; I was hungrily looking at the thing they gave me. They gave me not pices, they gave me pies.

God's Work

Come with me to Orissa in November, to Puri, a holy place, and a sanatorium, where you will find soldiers and the Governor's residence during summer months. Within ten miles' radius of Puri you will see skin and bone. With this very hand I have collected soiled pies from them tied tightly in their rags, and their hands were more paralysed than mine were at Kolhapur. Talk to them of modern progress. Insult them by taking the name of God before them in vain. They will call you and me fiends if we talk about God to them. They know, if they know any God at all, a God of terror, vengeance, a pitiless tyrant. They do not know what love is. What can you do for them? You will find it difficult to change these delightful sisters (pointing to the ladies present) from their silk saris to coarse khadi woven by those paralytic and crude hands. Khadi is rough! It is too heavy! Silk is soft to be touched and they can wear 9 yards of silk, but they cannot wear 9 yards of khadi. The poor sisters of Orissa have no saris; they are in rags. Yet they have not lost all sense of decency, but, I assure you, we have. We are naked in spite of our clothing, and they are clothed in spite of their nakedness. It is because of these that I wander about from place to place, I humour my people, I humour my American friends. I humoured two stripling youths from Harvard. When they wanted my autograph, I said, "No autograph for Americans." We struck a bargain: 'I give you my autograph; and you take to khadi.' They have promised, and I rely on the word

of an American gentleman. Many of them are doing this work — make no mistake about it — and they like it also.

But I cannot be satisfied, not till every man and woman in India is working at his or at her wheel. Burn that wheel if you find a better substitute. This is the one and only work which can supply the needs of the millions without disturbing them from their homes. It is a mighty task and I know that I cannot do it. I know also that God can do it. The mightiest and the strongest matter is but a tiny affair for Him, when it pleases Him. He can destroy them all in the twinkling of an eye, as He has destroyed now thousands of homes in Gujarat and as He had destroyed thousands of homes a few years ago in South India. I carry this message of khadi and the spinning wheel with the fullest faith in God, and therefore in His creation, man. You may laugh at me today. You may call this a sordid thing. If you like, you may distrust me and say this is some political schemer who has come to place his khadi before us, but he has got many things up his sleeve. You may misinterpret me and my message. You may say: 'We are too weak to do these things, and too poor.' I know it is possible for you to repel me by your arguments and make me speechless. But I shall not lose faith in you so long as I cannot lose faith in God. It is impossible for me to lose that faith, and therefore I cannot lose faith in the message of khadi and the spinning wheel.

If I have not succeeded in opening out my heart to you, and if I have not succeeded in showing to you the rock-bottom spirituality of the message of khadi, I don't think I shall ever succeed in doing so. All I can say is I mean to succeed. My lips may not deliver the true message. God will do it all, in whose name I have delivered this message to you. God bless you.

Young India, 15-9-1927

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THE KHADI SPIRIT

He went on in the same strain to describe what he called the khadi spirit, and the inwardness of the khadi movement:

" But it would be wrong perhaps on my part, if I did not say a few words showing how we can illustrate the spirit of Nandan in our daily life. In my humble opinion, we cannot better illustrate that spirit than by clothing ourselves with the 'khadi spirit'. Please note the distinction I am making. I am not saying that we can illustrate the spirit of Nanda by wearing khadi merely, but I say that we must have the 'khadi spirit'. Even a blackguard, even a prostitute should be expected to wear khadi, since she or he, the blackguard, must wear something even as they eat the wheat and the rice in this country, in common with us; but the 'khadi spirit' means that we must know the meaning that the wearing of khadi carries with it. Every time that we take our khadi garment early in the morning to wear for going out, we should remember that we are doing so in the name of Daridranarayan and for the sake of the starving millions of India. If we have the 'khadi spirit' in us, we would surround ourselves with simplicity in every walk of life. The 'khadi spirit' means illimitable patience. For those who know anything about the production of khadi know how patiently the spinners and the weavers have to toil at their trade, and even so must we have patience whilst we are spinning 'the thead of Swaraj'. The 'khadi spirit' means also an equally illimitable faith. Even as the spinner toiling away at the spinning wheel has illimitable faith that the yarn he spins by itself small enough, put in the aggregate,

would be enough to clothe every human being in India, so must we have illimitable faith in truth and non-violence ultimately conquering every obstacle in our way.

"The 'khadi spirit' means fellow-feeling with every human being on earth. It means a complete renunciation of everything that is likely to harm our fellow creatures, and if we but cultivate that spirit amongst the millions of our countrymen, what a land this India of ours would be! And the more I move about the country and the more I see the things for myself, the richer, the stronger is my faith growing in the capacity of the spinning wheel. If we try to reason out with our intellect the capacity of repeating of the mere name 'Rama', our intellect will fail to satisfy our heart, and yet I hope that there is not one single person in this audience who would consider that those rishis who gave us the heritage of repeating those names were either fools or idiots. Even so I suggest to you that the khadi spirit has all the capacity that I have just now described to you. But there is one condition behind it, I admit, one condition alone that attaches to the expression of that spirit. It is this that even as Ramanama became in our minds a living force, because it had behind it the unrivalled tapashcharya of those who gave it to us, so it is with the khadi movement. It ought to have the tapashcharya of those who are behind it. Every minute of my time I am fully conscious of the fact that, if those who have consecrated their lives to khadi will not incessantly insist on purity of life, khadi is bound to stink in the nostrils of our countrymen. I am well aware that khadi cannot compete with other articles of commerce on their own platform, on their own terms. Even as satyagraha is a weapon unique of its kind and not one of the ordinary weapons used by people, so is khadi a uniqe article of commerce which will not, cannot, succeed on terms common to other articles

But I know this also as certainly as I know that I am sitting here, that khadi is unique and it would out-distance every article in India today. You will, therefore, perhaps understand why I do not enthuse over all these khadi purses you have given me. I know that, if you had even a tenth of the faith that I have in khadi, you would not give your two hundreds and your two thousands out of your plenty, but you would satisfy me till there is no money required for khadi."*

Young India, 22-9-1927

* From an article by M. D. entitled 'Three Speeches'.

THE FALLACY OF HANDLOOM WEAVING

Replying to the Saurashtras' address at Madura Gandhiji said:

"I am much touched by your reference to your connection with Rajkot, the home of my youth. But please remember that it is a difficult thing to claim such close kinship with me. Because you have thereby created for yourself a greater responsibility in connection with every activity of mine in so far as it commends itself to your attention. What can be the use of a man having such a large number of kinsmen if he may not fall back upon them in the hour of peril? But it is possible for you, if you will, to claim a still closer kinship with me. For though I am proud of being the son of a father who was the minister of a State, I am, if it is at all possible, prouder still on having become a fellow-weaver with you. For whilst my father was weaving the destiny of a little State that was placed under his charge for the time being, you and I, if we wish to, can weave the destiny of this great land by a profession which with you is hereditary, but which I have adopted by choice. And in taking that greater pride in reminding you of this kinship I am doing no violence to the memory, the sacred memory of my father, because I am following in his footsteps in ministering to the needs of larger classes of people. And this claim of closer kinship with you brings me to an important paragraph in your address.

"You ask me to encourage hand-weaving even through foreign yarn or mill-made yarn inasmuch as, so you say in your address, it is not possible today to find hand-spun yarn of the fineness you require

and in the quantity you require. Now I shall tell you as a fellow weaver why I cannot possibly endorse your recommendation. If I endorse your recommendation, I hope to be able to show you that it would be bad for you and bad for the class which I have in view and which you also should have in view. You should, as keen and shrewd businessmen as some of you are, understand that every weaver who weaves yarn which is supplied by foreign mills or even by mills of India, places himself at the disposal of and at the tender mercy of the mills. You as weavers should realize that this hand-weaving which you are today controlling to a certain extent will in time to come slip away from your hands as soon as the mills of the world or the mills of India are ready to weave the patterns that you are today exclusively weaving. Let me inform you, if you do not know the fact already, that various able mill-owners of the world are making experiments in order to weave the patterns which are today your monopoly. It is no fault of the mill-owners or the mill industry that that mill industry is endeavouring day after day to take away the monopolies and take this trade in its own hands. To make continuous improvements in its machinery and to make continuous encroachments upon the handicrafts of the world is really the objective and the ideal of these great industrialists. Indeed, it is the condition of their very existence that they should try to take this trade also from off your hands. What has befallen the industry of spinning will most decidedly befall the industry of hand-weaving also if the weaver will not take a leaf out of my book. Let me inform you — and you don't know this, very few people in India know this fact — that I began as you are now doing. I first became a weaver in 1915. I told you that I became first a weaver and then a spinner. I have woven with these very hands both foreign yarns and our mill yarns. But you will excuse me for claiming to know more

than you do the secret of this business. As I was sitting — I can point out the spot where I was sitting — as I was sitting at my hand-loom weaving cloth, certainly not half as fine as any of you perhaps weave, but as I was sitting at my loom, I was considering for myself where I should be and where thousands and tens of thousands of weavers should be when mills were organized enough to weave that kind of cloth themselves. And as I was thinking of this thing my heart went out to the millions of starving sisters in our villages, and I began, as I was weaving, to think of the lot of these sisters. I became sad and disconcerted, and together with my companions I began a diligent search for some spinner who would teach us hand-spinning, and I began also to find whether there was a single village where I could find hand-spinning still going on. I knew nothing then of the fact that there were some sisters spinning in the Punjab. But as despair was creeping over me, I took shelter under a brave widow of Gujarat. She was working in the cause of untouchables. I shared this deep sorrow of mine with this great sister, and I charged her to wander from place to place in Gujarat and not rest content till she had found those sisters, who still had the art of hand-spinning in their possession. And it was she who discovered at Vijapur in Gujarat a few Mussalman sisters who were prepared to spin if she would take their yarn from their hands. From that moment began the great revival which is now covering over fifteen hundred villages in India. And it was after this discovery that I decided not to weave a single thread of foreign yarn or mill-spun yarn in the Ashram of which I happened to be in charge.

"I place for your consideration yet another important fact. If you will study the history of the hand-weaving movement in India, you will discover that at the present moment several thousands of weavers have been obliged to abandon their trade. Weavers all of

your own trade, Saurashtras, are today working in Bombay as scavengers. Weavers in the Punjab are some of them hired soldiery and some of them have taken to the butcher's trade. And so you will understand why I cannot possibly endorse your recommendation. That does not mean that you may leave off weaving mill yarn from today. You do not need encouragement from me. But I venture to suggest to you that it is to your interest not to ask me to mix up this mill-spun yarn weaving together with this movement which I am leading in all humility. And it is equally to your interest to support this movement so that, if it becomes stable, prosperous and immovable, every one of you would find a respectable living. I therefore suggest to you that, if this hand-spinning movement grows apace, it is likely that it may be of help to you."

Young India, 13-10-1927

PROFITABLE COTTON CULTIVATION

A correspondent suggests that there should be a widespread movement to induce cotton cultivators to store a quantity of cotton for themselves to be converted into hand-spun yarn and finally into khadi for their own use. He also suggests that in non-cotton areas individual peasants should be encouraged to grow enough cotton as they grow vegetables for their own requirements. The correspondent contends that, if this becomes popular, it will cheapen khadi for the peasantry. He says that in some parts of the South before the khadi movement came there were cultivators who followed this method. The correspondent thinks that Indian States are best able to promote this kind of cultivation of cotton.

There is much force in the correspondent's suggestion. The experiment of inducing cotton cultivators to retain sufficient cotton for their own needs is being tried in Bijolia (Rajputana), Bardoli and Kathiawad. But it has been found difficult in Kathiawad for the cultivators to resist the temptation of selling stored cotton when prices ruled high. This is not possible, until the cultivators appreciate the economics of khadi, and the fact that labour spent upon cotton during their leisure hours in subjecting it to the processes antecedent to weaving will bring about the same result that they achieve by selling cotton at a high price, and will in addition free themselves from the clutches of the speculator. This means that the All India Spinners' Association will have to educate the cultivators in the economics of khadi. There is no doubt that in order to overtake all the branches of khadi work it is necessary for khadi workers to come in close touch with the cotton growers, because even for buying cotton for the manufacture of khadi for town consumption it would be necessary to come in touch with the cotton growers, and buy from them direct instead of buying

in the market as is being done at present. If we would be independent of the speculator and the fluctuations of the cotton market and stabilize the price of khadi, we shall have to come in touch with the cultivator and induce him to deal with us directly. The greater the progress of khadi the more shall we find that our methods have to be far different from those hitherto adopted by the commercial world, which believes in selling at the highest price obtainable and buying at the cheapest rate possible. The world commerce at the present moment is not based upon equitable considerations. Its maxim is, 'Buyers beware.' The maxim of khadi economics is 'Equity for All.' It therefore rules out the present soul-killing competitive method. Khadi economics are designed in the interest of the poorest and the helpless, and khadi will be successful only to the extent that the workers permeate the masses and command their confidence. And the only way of commanding their confidence is doing selfless work among them.

The correspondent's suggestion that the Indian States are more fortunately placed in the matter of storing cotton by cotton cultivators and growing enough for home consumption by other cultivators, is no doubt true. The question however is, 'Who will bell the cat?' The majority of the States are little concerned with the welfare of the peasantry. Their aim in life for the present moment seems to be to increase their revenue as much as possible and at any cost, and to spend the largest part of it for their own pleasures. Moreover they like other capitalists have little faith in khadi economics. A very cautious experiment is now being tried, in Mysore, of finding out the possibilities of the spinning wheel as a village industry. One may hope that, if that experiment is tried scientifically and patiently and is found to succeed, it will prove infectious.

Young India, 27-10-1927

Meanwhile I can only invite the attention of 'No Changers' to the great constructive programme of khadi. Those who do not appreciate it do not understand the most potent and the most operative part of non-cooperation, viz. non-violence. Non-cooperation without non-violence can never rise to the dignity of a creed, and becomes merely one among many strategies in a campaign. Non-violent non-cooperation has been conceived as an infallible remedy replacing all others. And khadi is the corner-stone of its positive side. Here is a reluctant testimony in favour of khadi given by Mr. Harcourt Robertson in *The Daily Despatch.* The writer is claimed by the editor to be 'one who has spent many years in British India where he was engaged in occupations demanding an intimate knowledge of market conditions and the Indian psychology.' I am indebted to *The Leader* of the 12th inst. for the following:

> "He (Mr. Robertson) ascribes the heavy drop in the amount of British cotton fabrics purchased by India not to post-war dislocation and economic stress, nor to the poverty of the masses, for 'the Indian peasant is always appallingly poor,' nor to famines, for 'famine in India is of almost yearly occurrence,' but to the competition of Indian and Japanese mills and most of all to khaddar which, he writes, towers like a giant above all other causes. He regards khaddar as the real enemy. His description of it and of its high priest, Mahatma Gandhi, will be read with interest. He says:
>
> 'Khaddar is a native-made cloth woven on primitive looms from hand-spun yarn by unskilled, amateurish workers. It is coarse, stiff, full of knots and faults, and always looks dirty, — yet there is a positive vogue for it, even wealthy natives taking a pride in garments made from it. For khaddar

represents in concrete form the slogan of the rapidly growing nationalist party: 'India for the Indian'. Not a penny of the money spent on it leaves the country. He who wears it helps to feed India's starving millions, proclaims his country's independence, and shows himself a patriot of the first water. . . . Khaddar is one of the weapons used by — and, indeed, invented by — Mahatma Gandhi in his fight against foreign rule in India. Half saint, half fanatic, and wholly patriot, Mahatma Gandhi now speaks, in his person and through the native press, to the very hearts of India's educated classes. Non-cooperation is not dead in India because it is no longer talked. It has now reached the stage of silent and dangerous activity. . . . Let Mr. Gandhi's missionaries once rope in the masses, and India will no longer be a poor buyer, she will be no buyer at all. . . . The blow is aimed not only at cotton. It is a definite attempt to ruin the market for all British goods.'

These remarks cannot but hearten those who have been working, under the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, for the spread of khaddar. That great apostle of non-violence believes that through the charkha India can win economic freedom, and that political freedom must follow in its wake. Mr. Robertson is alarmed and suggests a remedy, and it is this: 'Restore confidence in the Britsh Raj, inculcate the Empire idea, cause the masses of India to realize how much they owe to British rule, and Britain will recover her Indian market.' He urges that pro-British propaganda should be carried on through cinema films, which should be exhibited free of cost to the ignorant masses, other means of propaganda, such as the press, not being neglected. If this suggestion is given effect to, 'India may yet be saved to us, and our market there is by no means irretrievably lost yet.' No time is to be lost,

for 'in a few short years the nationalist leaven may well have worked so that any attempt to neutralize it would fail because of being made too late.' In the meantime he suggests that something should be done to give wide publicity in India to ideas such as 'Lancashire fabrics of Indian cotton', 'India's best customer is Lancashire', 'To buy Lancashire cloth is to help India's cultivators'. 'Unless these and similar remedies,' he concludes, 'are applied at once, it seems certain that the Indian market for Lancashire cotton goods is not a sick but a dying one.' The writer is greatly mistaken in thinking that the capitalistic propaganda of the nature he suggests will stem the tide of the national movement. India's masses and classes are not so unsophisticated as not to see through the whole game. The only effect of propaganda organized for purposes of economic exploitation is likely to be to give a stimulus to the khaddar movement, and make even those among Indians who at present do not attach much importance to its economic potentiality look at the charkha from a different angle of vision. A propaganda of the nature suggested would be a clear admission that khaddar is winning its way, and this will have the effect of inducing faith in it on the part of those who belong to the category of doubters. It is not by interested propaganda but by substantial concessions to the national demands of Indians that the relations of the two countries can be placed on a healthy footing and the causes which are operating to the detriment of Lancashire's trade with India removed."

Needless to say that khadi is not a threat. It is the breath of national life like Swaraj. The khadi movement like Swaraj cannot be given up against any concessions however generous. To give up khadi would be to sell the masses, the soul of India.

Young India, 15-1-1928

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A SISTER'S DIFFICULTY

A sister writes:

> "A year ago I heard you speaking on the supreme necessity of every one of us wearing khadi, and thereupon decided to adopt it. But we are poor people. My husband says that khadi is costly. Belonging as I do to Maharashtra, I wear a *sari* 9 yards long. Now if I reduced the length of my *sari* to 6 yards, there would be a great saving, but the elders will not hear of any such reduction. I reason with them that wearing khadi is the more important thing, and that the style and length of the *sari* is absolutely immaterial, but in vain. They say that it is my youth that puts all these new-fangled notions into my head. But I expect they will agree to the proposed reduction in length if you are good enough to write to me, saying that khadi ought to be used, even at the cost of the style of clothing."

I have sent the desired reply to the sister. But I take note of her difficulty here, as I know that the same difficulty is encountered by many other sisters as well.

The letter in question bears witness to the strong patriotic feeling of the writer, for there are not many sisters who like her are ready to give up old styles or old customs on their own initiative. The number of such sisters and brothers is legion, as would gladly have Swaraj if it could be attained without suffering any discomfort or incurring any expenditure and in spite of their sticking to old customs regardless of their propriety or the reverse. But Swaraj is not such a cheap commodity. To attain Swaraj implies

the cultivation of a spirit of self-sacrifice, including the sacrifice of provincialism.

Provincialism is a bar not only to the realization of national Swaraj, but also the achievement of provincial autonomy. Women perhaps are more responsible than men for keeping up this narrow spirit. Variety is worth cherishing up to a certain limit, but if the limit is exceeded, amenities and customs masquerading under the name of variety are subversive of nationalism. The Deccani *sari* is a thing of beauty, but the beauty must be let go if it can be secured only by sacrificing the nation. We should consider the Kachchhi style of short *sari* or the Punjabi *odhni* to be really artistic, if the wearing of khadi can be cheapened and facilitated by their means. The Deccani, Gujarati, Kachchhi and Bengali styles of wearing *sari* are all of them various national styles, and each of them is as national as the rest. Such being the case, preference should be accorded to that style which requires the smallest amount of cloth consistently with the demands of decency. Such is the Kachchhi style, which takes up only 3 yards of cloth, i. e. about half the length of the Gujarati *sari*, not to mention the saving of trouble in having to carry a smaller weight. If the *pachhedo* and the petticoat are of the same colour, one cannot at once make out whether it is only a *pachhedo* or full *sari*. The mutual exchange and imitation of such national style is eminently desirable.

Well-to-do people might well keep in their wardrobes all possible provincial styles of clothing. It would be very courteous and patriotic on the part of a Gujarati host and hostess to put on the Bengali style of dress when they entertain Bengali guests, and *vice versa*. But such procedure is open only to the patriotic rich. Patriotic people of the middle and poorer classes should take pride in adopting that particular provincial style which cheapens as well as

facilitates the wearing of khadi. And even there they should fix their eye upon the clothing style of the poorest of the poor.

Swadeshi does not mean drowning oneself in one's own little puddle, but making it tributary to the ocean that is the nation. And it can claim to contribute to the ocean only if it is and keeps itself pure. It is therefore clear that only such local or provincial customs should have a nation-wide vogue as are not impure or immoral. And when once this truth is grasped, nationalism is transmuted into the enthusiasm of humanity.

What is true of clothing is equally true of language, food, etc. As we might imitate the dress of other provinces on suitable occasions, so might we utilize the language and other things. But at present all our energy is wasted in the useless, impossible and fatal attempt to give English the pride of place to the neglect, conscious or unconscious, of our mother tongue and, all the more so, of the languages of other provinces.

Young India, 2-2-1928

HANDLOOM v. SPINNING WHEEL

Apropos of the contention often thoughtlessly advanced that the handloom is the only thing worth preserving and that it can only be preserved through the use of mill-spun yarn, Shri C. Balaji Rao writes:

> "An effective answer to those who in order to belittle the charkha would exalt the hand-loom is given here. 'Lord Curzon was voicing the opinions of his departmental scientific advisers when he declared at the Delhi Durbar that it was inevitable that the handloom should be superseded by the power-loom, just as the hand punkah was being superseded by the electric fan.'"

Of course Lord Curzon's dictum need not be accepted as a conclusive answer, if the longevity of the handloom can be sustained through mill yarn or any other means save the spinning wheel. And these pages, I hope, are daily making it clear that hand-spinning can save the handloom in spite of the prediction of Lord Curzon. Indeed, if the wheel regains its ancient status in our national life, the hand-loom and many other domestic industries must revive automatically.

Young India, 23-2-1928

WHAT CAN OUR MILLS DO?

Everybody is anxious that at this critical juncture in our history we should be able to exhibit some real strength. It is becoming more and more realized that such strength can be developed and shown only through boycott of foreign cloth as distinguished from British cloth. In this boycott it is possible for our mills to play an important, indeed a decisive, part if they wish.

Some day or other they will have to choose between this alien Government and the people. There is no doubt that to a large extent they are dependent for their existence upon the toleration, if not the goodwill, of the Government. Thoreau told the truth when he said that possession of riches under an evil Government was a sin and poverty was virtue. The riches of the rich are always at the disposal of the Government of the day whether it is good or bad.

But if the mills are dependent for their existence on the toleration or goodwill of the Government, they are no less so on the toleration or goodwill of the people. They can afford to ignore the people only so long as the latter remain ignorant, supine or disunited. But the past seven years have not been lived in vain by the nation. The mass awakening that has taken place will never die. No one can tell when and how the people will show their strength.

But the mills occupy a privileged position. By showing a little courage, a little consideration for the true interests of the nation, and by exercising a little self-sacrifice, they can serve both the Government

and the people. They can convert the Government and advance the people's cause.

This is how in my humble opinion they can do it:

They can standardize their prices, taking the lowest average of a number of top and lean years.

They can come to terms with the leaders organizing boycott as to the quantity and quality of cloth required for the nation.

They can refrain from manufacturing those varieties that can be easily and immediately produced by khadi organizations, thus freeing their energy for manufacturing more of the varieties they can at the present moment manufacture more easily than the khadi organizations.

They can limit their profits to a minimum and let the surplus, if any, be devoted to the fulfilment of the boycott, or if that be unnecessary, to the improvement of the condition of the labourers.

This would mean all-round honesty, perseverance, mutual trust, a voluntary and honourable triple alliance between labour, capital and the consumer. It would mean capacity for organization on a vast scale. And if we are to attain boycott of foreign cloth through non-violence, we shall have some day or other to fulfil the tests just enumerated by me.

In my humble opinion we are eminently fitted for the task. The organization required for the purpose is not unfamiliar to us. The only question is, have we the will? Have the mill-owners enough vision, enough love of the country? If they have, they can take the lead.

Let me redeclare my own faith. For boycott to be swiftly brought about, a combination between khadi and truly indigenous mills is desirable, but not absolutely necessary. I use the words 'truly indigenous', because we have bogus mills in India which are Indian only in the sense that they are located in the country, whose shareholders, whose management, whose spirit

are mainly, when not wholly, foreign. But if the indigenous mills cannot or will not lead or join the national movement, I am convinced that khadi alone can achieve the boycott, if the politically minded India has the will, the faith and the energy required for the purpose. We have not enough horse-power expressed through steam engines, oil engines or electricity, but we have an inexhaustible reservoir of man-power lying idle and pleading to be used, and essentially qualified for the purpose. Oh for a faith that would see and use this supply of living power !

Young India, 15-3-1928

CHARKHA A PROVED WANT

Akbarpur in U. P. is a little place where Professor Kripalani's khadi band worked for seven years. For reasons into which I need not go, this band had to withdraw from Akbarpur. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru describes the touching scenes that followed the withdrawal and how the centre had somehow to be kept up. The following from his letter to the All India Spinners' Association will be read with interest:

> "I have told you already that the Gandhi Ashram has left Akbarpur. We have taken charge temporarily because we felt that pending your decision we ought to carry on. If we had not taken charge, there would have been a break, and it would have been more difficult to start afresh. Besides on sentimental grounds also it was a little difficult to abandon the place. It has been a well-known centre for so many years, and a large number of weavers and others are intimately connected with it. To leave it suddenly would have had a bad effect on the whole neighbourhood and upset the economy of a great number of poor households who were dependent on it. Indeed, we were told that some touching incidents were witnessed when the Gandhi Ashram announced that they were closing up. Many old women spinners who used to sell their yarn at a distant centre, finding this centre closed, trudged up many miles to headquarters, and wept when they found that their yarn was not to be bought. Many weavers with their wives and families came up to the Akbarpur office and said they would perform satyagraha. For seven years they had been working for the Ashram, and now they were being left in the lurch. You will realize how difficult it was for us to refuse to take charge under these circumstances. But, of course, sentimental considerations cannot decide the question. Akbarpur possesses some marked advantages and at the same time a very great disadvantage. As

a weaving centre it is famous, and even now some of the finest weaving in India is done at Tanda in the neighbourhood. Unhappily this fine weaving — called Jamdani work — is done with foreign yarn. On the other hand there is very little spinning done near Akbarpur, and if the centre is to be worked, it will be necessary to bring yarn from elsewhere. The Gandhi Ashram, I believe, used to get their yarn chiefly from across the border in Bihar, and also from Muzaffarnagar. For us it will be easier to get it from the Northern Districts of the U. P.—Moradabad, Bijnor, etc. The cost of sending the yarn is not great."

If khadi became as current as ghee or grain, there could never have been a thought of withdrawing from any centre. If we had funds and workers, we would have representatives not only in 1,600 villages but in 700,000 villages. This is no impracticable ambition, when we remember the fact that there are at least two representatives of the alien Government in each of these villages. If anyone before the British advent had suggested any such thing, he would have been laughed out of court. But reflection should show that the restoration of the wheel in every one of the villages is not half as laughable as the hope of imperial Britain being represented in the republican villages of India would have been in the 17th century. What the women near Akbarpur are reported to have said demonstrates what a felt want the charkha fills or can fill in every village of this ancient land. It is no credit to our patriotism that the able weavers of Akbarpur have to fall back upon foreign yarn for their far-famed *jamdani* which it was their pride nearly half a century ago to weave out of yarn spun by the sacred hands of their own sisters living next door to them. It will not be long before the spinners in our villages are able to spin as fine and as strong yarn as any foreign yarn now infesting our market.

Young India, 22-3-1928

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FOREIGN CLOTH BOYCOTT

A friend, intimately connected with mills and desirous of having our mills contributing their full quota to the foreign cloth boycott movement, asks:

> 1. "On what basis do you want prices standardized? For remember all mills are not alike. Some are bad, some are good; some use more sizing than others, some have more reserve than others; Bombay mills make less profits than upcountry ones. These differences are illustrative of many others that might be stated."

The one general answer that may be given is: "Where there's a will there's a way." The mills will contribute their quota only when they get rid of inertia, think furiously, and that too in terms of the nation, not merely the pockets of shareholders, directors or agents. But by way of making my position in this matter clearer I may say that all the mills who will join the boycott movement will have to pool all the differences and arrive at a standard price which would at least mean a large slice off from the present profits of at least some mills. If their patriotism is sound and progressive, the flourishing ones will cover the losing ones, avoidable differences will be avoided. In the scheme I have in view the mills need never lose in the aggregate, and they must not profit at the expense of the buyer.

> 2. "Only some mills will undertake not to manufacture khadi. But what about those that only spin low counts? What is your test of khadi?"

This is a matter of common honesty and arrangement between khadi organizations and mills. At present I am sorry to have to say that even some good mills

are not ashamed to label their cloth 'khadi' simply in order to take an illegitimate advantage of the growing khadi atmosphere in the moffusil. If a workable arrangement is come to, I expect that there will be a line of demarcation for the time being between the cloth to be manufactured by khadi centres and mills. The manufacture of cloth will be controlled as it often is in times of war. What in a war based on violence we do by compulsion, in this war based on non-violence we shall do by choice. Our ability voluntarily, i. e. merely under pressure of public opinion, to arrange boycotts, etc., will be the outward but indispensable test of our non-violence, if we have any in us.

> 3. "How will profits be regulated? You know as well as I do that prices of cotton fluctuate with irritating irregularity."

This assumes our inability to control the cotton market. Surely, if the largest manufacturers of the country combine in the patriotic effort, they will control the cotton market. America rules our cotton prices because we stupidly, thoughtlessly and selfishly send out our cotton. But boycott means that we shall control the movement of cotton, as we shall control many other things, if we are to achieve complete boycott, as we must, if we have developed the true national spirit and have confidence in ourselves and the nation.

> 4. "If you lay much stress upon honesty, perseverance, mutual trust, etc., you are doomed."

As I have no bayonet at my command and would not have it even if I could command it, I must press for the qualities which the friend fears are at a discount. I do not share his fear — what is more, I have patience enough to wait for the development of those qualities if they are not available in sufficient measure today. For this nation will never come to her own unless we exhibit them as a nation. I know too that we shall take much longer to discipline ourselves for violence,

fraud and the like than we shall for truth and non-violence and all that they imply.

The friend then draws my attention to the following omissions in my previous article :

(a) The mills that join the scheme may not use foreign yarn or foreign artificial silk as many now do.

(b) They may not insure with foreign companies.

(c) They may not import foreign cloth and label it ' Swadeshi '.

I had assumed that (a) and (c) were a foregone conclusion. I should not care to insist on (b) if the insistence would hamper the proposed joint venture. Much as I should like indigenous insurance enterprise, I am convinced that it is the foreign cloth that blocks the way as nothing else does. If we can put this Himalayan obstacle out of the way, we shall easily cope with hillocks.

Young India, 22-3-1928

80

A MILL-OWNER ON BOYCOTT

An Ahmedabad mill-owner writes:

"I have been closely following your articles regarding foreign cloth boycott, and am desirous of offering a few suggestions with some of my fears in organizing the boycott. I believe that, if the mills of India join your scheme in the boycott of foreign cloth, we shall have achieved a success not only in boycott but in getting a ready market for the goods already accumulated in the mill warehouses. The mills can join this movement with double gain of serving the nation and safeguarding the shareholders' interests. For the shareholders could be assured of a regular dividend, instead of a fat dividend one year and no dividend the next. Not only will the profits be regulated but, as the goods will find a ready market, not much interest or warehousing charges will be incurred. This will be a direct saving in the cost of manufacture. The mills should under this organization manufacture cloth in such sizes only as may be necessary for weaving purposes, and thus a considerable national waste will be saved. Again, only that sort of cloth should be manufactured which may be decided upon by the controlling board, and all such pieces should be stamped with a stamp of the Boycott Committee so that no mill can pass off any cloth under standard or foreign.

As regards artificial silk, I cannot understand how any objection should be raised, if we are to use foreign dyes and sizing materials.

The aim of the boycott ought to be on the lines of replacing foreign cloth as far as mills are

concerned. You ask the mills not to manufacture khadi and that too rightly, which in other words means that they should make such cloth only as would replace foreign cloth not at present replaced by khadi. Artificial silk yarn is made from wood pulp, and is a cheap luxury which in my opinion should not be boycotted because it helps to replace foreign manufacture. Of course those mills using foreign yarn should not be called Swadeshi. But what would you call a mill using foreign cotton? Is the cloth made from it Swadeshi? Cotton fluctuations, unless they are wild, do not make any difference in the prices of cloth. No change has taken place in cloth prices since cotton has risen from Rs. 339 to Rs. 375. Your friend need not be afraid on this score. But at the same time Indian mills are unable to control the cotton prices as long as America rules the world cotton prices. Yes, if, as you say, the export of cotton is controlled, the fluctuations will not be so big. However, to attain that state nothing seems to be possible before we have Swaraj, and to get it we have to boycott foreign cloth from now. Therefore cotton fluctuations are likely to abide, and they will play their part in the present scheme of boycott.

Now coming over to the question of your trust in the honesty of the mill-owners, I must remark that you are too sanguine. Need I remind you of the fate of the Ahmedabad Mills Tilak Swaraj Fund and the threats held out on many occasions regarding its disbursement? Take it from me that you will certainly be doomed, if you are going to join hands with us without the strictest guarantees.

If the boycott is to succeed, you will only take those mills whose agents are genuine and reliable. Even if you have one dozen good mills to join you, good propaganda can be made, and believe me that the others will soon mend their ways.

It seems to me that if anything important is to be done it should either be put off till you return from Europe, if you are going there, or you should decide not to go to Europe and take up this question, because I believe, and many join me in my belief, that your presence is necessary to conduct the proposed joint movement."

The letter is refreshingly candid. I wish that the other mill-owners would take the view that this correspondent takes of the possibility of standardization of prices and necessarily therefore of cloth. It is refreshing too to find that fluctuations of cotton prices do not much affect prices of cloth. And I would add, in spite of the correspondent's view to the contrary, that it is possible to control cotton prices if it is possible for us to boycott foreign cloth. For prices of our cotton are dominated by America only because we export large quantities of cotton and that too to the market for which America also caters. If we consider it to be possible, as it has proved to be possible, to appeal successfully to the patriotism of the buyer of cloth, it is equally possible to make a successful appeal to that of the grower of cotton. Indeed the importance of foreign cloth boycott is derived from the knowledge that for it to succeed all the component parts of the nation have voluntarily to join the movement. It cannot succeed unless there is willing and hearty co-operation from the vast mass of the village population. My faith in the movement persists because I know the masses to be sound. Only the classes block the way because of their want of faith. If they will only shed their fear and their unbelief and lead the movement, the masses will follow. And this boycott is the only thing in which it is possible for the masses actively to join without having to make much sacrifice.

I do not share the view of the correspondent that artificial silk may be used with impunity in the manufacture of cloth in our mills. His comparison of foreign

dyes and foreign size with artificial silk is hastily made. Just now we contemplate boycott only of foreign cloth, not of dyes and size. All foreign yarns, therefore, whether silk, wool or cotton, natural or artificial, must be taboo; or, if foreign artificial silk yarn may be used with impunity, why not foreign cotton or wool or natural silk yarn?

But with foreign cotton it is a different thing. We need not exclude from use foreign cotton, for it is a raw product. What we must boycott for the sake of the starving masses living in enforced idleness for at least four months in the year is foreign yarn and cloth which the masses can spin and weave in their cottages.

The indigenous mill cloth too would be intolerable if it displaced these masses without finding for them an equivalent industry. The mills have a place in the economy of national life only to the extent that they supplement the national industry of hand-spinning in millions of our cottages. They will be a hindrance if they compete with them and supplant them. Their natural tendency no doubt is to supplant both the village spinner and the village weaver. It is only when the mill-owners, mill-agents, and their shareholders become truly national and conduct their affairs not to exploit the masses but for their benefit first and their own profits after, that they will be able to appreciate and not merely to join but to lead the boycott movement. That, if they take a long view of the matter, they have nothing to lose and much to gain has been made clear by the foregoing letter. Indeed it is a self-evident proposition. Boycott of foreign cloth, if it is the best assurance of steady work for the masses, is also an equal assurance to the mills of steady profits in the long run.

But the history of the mill industry at least during the past seven years of the mass movement does not fill one with much hope of the mills rising to the occasion and realizing their duty to the nation.

Instead of looking upon khadi with favour and fostering it, our mills have entered into an unfair, unpatriotic and illegitimate competition with khadi. The following are the figures of khadi manufactured by our mills during the respective years:

	1925	1926	1927
Lbs.	2,28,87,970	2,72,36,337	3,39,77,851
Yards	6,50,48,487	7,43,13,280	9,43,80,368

They have sold this enormous quantity of coarse cloth as khadi, and have not hesitated in some cases shamelessly to use the charkha label etc. with the deliberate purpose of exploiting the khadi atmosphere created by Congress organizations. It gives one pain to have to say that the mills that thus manufactured coarse cloth and palmed it off as khadi did a distinct disservice to the nation.

If their eyes are now opened, and if only to do belated reparation for the grave wrong done by them to the nation, they will head or at least join the boycott movement on the terms suggested by me or others equally effective.

This painful discovery of the figures has, however, a bright side to it. It is a revelation even to an optimist and khadi expert like me of the hold that khadi has acquired over the people. It shows that a much larger number than we are aware of has in obedience to the nation's call changed their taste and preferred to buy and use coarse cloth instead of the fine cloth they used to wear before. They have undoubtedly often paid higher prices than they used to. They have bought mill khadi largely under the mistaken belief that it was genuine and that it had the *imprimatur* of the Congress. An ardent lover of the masses has in these figures and my legitimate deductions therefrom much food for thought and equal cause for hope. As for my feared visit to Europe, I may assure the correspondent that I do not propose to visit Europe if an effective scheme of boycott materializes in the very near future.

Young India, 5-4-1928

81

PLACE OF KHADI

Lovers of khadi have been writing to me energetically warning me against coquetting with mill-owners in the vain hope, as they call it, of securing their active co-operation on terms beneficial to the nation in the prosecution of the campaign of boycott of foreign cloth. I appreciate their warning. Some of them are tried and experienced workers in the khadi movement. But I do not give up hope of the mill-owners some day or other coming round to the national view. After all as an out-and-out believer in the method of non-violence, I may not let a single opportunity to slip of converting the mill-owners to the nationalistic view, even as I may not pass by a single occasion of converting Englishmen to the Indian view of India's good. After all, if we are to win our freedom by non-violent means, we shall have to knock at the doors of those who put obstacles in its way, and plead with them to remove them. And even as in a bloody revolution those who are supposed to stand in the way are made to pay the last penalty whether they are countrymen or otherwise, so in a non-violent revolution are they, whether countrymen or foreigners, required to face satyagraha, if they will not listen to reason and will obstinately stand in the way.

I therefore see no harm in having stated the conditions on which mill-owners can co-operate with the nation. It would have been wrong not to have done so. And if they accept the terms, I know that khadi i. e. the masses have nothing to lose. For, if the mills work not for exploiting the masses as they now do, but for serving them, they will supplement the products of the cottage spinning wheel and the

hand-loom and not supersede them as they now do. There is no doubt that, if they hesitate to accept the terms stated by me, they will do so because the logical consequence repels them even as the logical consequence of Englishmen really becoming servants of the nation repels them. I would therefore ask khadi lovers not to be afraid of my so-called 'coquetting.' If we are strong in our faith, if khadi has the inherent vitality we claim for it, if it is the need of the masses, and if we persist in our effort with them, they will not fail to realize it. Khadi will fail only when khadi lovers falter in their faith or if their faith is based on a mere shadow, i. e. if there is no grinding poverty among the masses; if they have no leisure hours during the year, or if, though they have spare hours, the spinning wheel is not the most suitable and practicable occupation conceivable for many millions.

It is because of the implicit faith I have in khadi in terms of the propositions just stated and of the strength born of that faith that I am 'coquetting' with the mill-owners. It is quite likely, it is perhaps now practically certain, that no immediate good will come out of these negotiations. But they will serve for further action or guidance, if we have not meanwhile already achieved boycott of foreign cloth.

It is therefore profitable to inquire, even at the risk of repetition, what place khadi has in any scheme of boycott. In my opinion, boycott of foreign cloth is both necessary and feasible only because it affects and benefits the masses and can be achieved only if they co-operate. Boycott of foreign cloth would have but a temporary value if it could be obtained solely by the indigenous mills. And I hold it to be impossible in the near future to enforce the boycott through the single agency of mills. In my opinion, it is khadi alone that has made such boycott a practical proposition. Indeed it is so practical that, if the politically

minded India were to take up the sales of khadi, it is possible to manufacture in a year all the khadi that may be required by the nation even though there may be not a single yard of mill calico foreign or indigenous available. I affirm this on the basis of the assumption that the villages will mostly manufacture their own khadi and the organized centres will manufacture for those who are not self-spinners. Experience of the past seven years shows that, if there is a sudden famine of cloth in the country and if the masses are encouraged, they have sufficient skill and the indigenous machinery for manufacturing their own khadi. No doubt a revolutionary change in the mental outlook and sartorial tastes of politically minded India is necessary. I have no doubt that, if the bulk of them do not respond now, they will have to do so when they realize that khadi has become irresistible. And to make it irresistible khadi workers have to work away with steadfastness, honesty, scientific skill and precision. I have 'coquetted' with mill-owners and discussed the possibility of immediate boycott of foreign cloth in association with them, in order to show that, if they mean it, they can give themselves the privilege of serving the nation at the same time that they serve themselves. Meanwhile let none doubt that khadi is silently and imperceptibly revolutionizing the national taste, and will bring about the boycott in its own good time, if it is not anticipated by some such combination as I have ventured to suggest.

Young India, 12-4-1928

OFF THE TRAIL

Remarkable are the attempts made by and on behalf of the Government to befog people's minds and take them away from the main point by raising side issues and discovering or professing to discover flaws in evidence produced in support of the main point. It does not suit the Government to admit that its history is a history of the ruin of India's industries and India's manhood. One of such recent attempts is to discredit the oft told story in the press and on the platform about the cutting off by the weavers of their own thumbs in order to escape the East India Company's myrmidons who sought to compel them to wind silk. If the weaver has no thumb, he cannot do the work expected of him. And the way the history has been discredited is by digging out the credentials of William Bolts on the strength of whose evidence the late Ramesh Chandra Dutt first made the statement regarding the cutting off of thumbs. The writer of the refutation is not able to say that William Bolts gave false evidence, but he says that William Bolts had no character to keep and that therefore his evidence is not worthy of credence. And he further says that he was a dismissed servant of the Company under its resolution which described him as 'a very unworthy and unprofitable servant of the Company, his conduct has been distinguished by a tenacious adherence to those pernicious principles relative to the rights of inland trade, in which he appears to have been so conspicuously oppressive.' Who does not know the tricks of petty-fogging lawyers to discredit witnesses by proving their bad character as if a man with a bad character was ever incapable of making a true statement? I make bold to say that whatever the character of William Bolts,

his testimony about the cutting off of thumbs need not be discredited unless it can be otherwise disproved, and there has been nothing brought forward to show that that testimony is unworthy to be believed. On the contrary, what is more likely than that weavers in order to escape harrowing and continuous oppression would once for all render themselves physically unfit to do the work imposed upon them under unbearable punishment? After all the evidence of William Bolts is only part of the story of the ruin of India's industries told by Ramesh Chandra Dutt with such deadly effect and supported by the evidence of a variety of witnesses, the cumulative effect of whose evidence becomes irresistible. The main point is whether the industry was or was not ruined with the greatest deliberation. If it was, it makes little difference if the evidence of one witness is rejected; and it will lie ill in the mouth of the criminal to say that out of a hundred witnesses one has told untruth. But as I have said in this instance, there is nothing relevant brought forward to show that William Bolts' testimony is not to be believed. Let me, however, put before the reader a few relevant extracts from Dutt's first volume on the Economic History of India. He says:

> "It will appear from the facts stated in the last two chapters that large portions of the Indian population were engaged in various industries down to the first decade of the nineteenth century. Weaving was still the national industry of the people; millions of women eked out the family income by their earnings from spinning; and dyeing, tanning, and working in metals also gave employment to millions. It was not, however, the policy of the East India Company to foster Indian industries. It has been stated in a previous chapter that as early as 1769 the Directors wished the manufacture of raw silk to be encouraged in Bengal, and that of silk fabrics discouraged. And they also directed

> that silk winders should be made to work in the Company's factories, and prohibited from working outside 'under severe penalties by the authority of the Government', his mandate had its desired effect. The manufacture of silk and cotton goods declined in India, and the people who had exported these goods to the markets of Europe and Asia in previous centuries began to import them in increasing quantities!"

So much was the importation of silk and cotton goods from England stimulated by these methods that whereas in 1794 it was £ 156, in 1813 it rose to £ 108,824. In 1813 the Company's charter was renewed, and important evidence was taken at the enquiry prior to renewal. "In respect of Indian manufactures," says the author, "they—the Commons—sought to discover how they could be replaced by British manufactures, and how British industries could be promoted at the expense of Indian industries."

The commercial policy of England is thus described by Henry St. George Tucker:

> "What is the commercial policy which we have adopted in this country with relation to India? The silk manufactures and its piecegoods made of silk and cotton intermixed have long since been excluded altogether from our markets; and of late, partly in consequence of the operation of a duty of 67 per cent, but chiefly from the effect of superior machinery, the cotton fabrics, which hitherto constituted the staple of India, have not only been displaced in this country, but we actually export our cotton manufactures to supply a part of the consumption of our Asiatic possessions. India is thus reduced from the state of a manufacturing to that of an agricultural country."

Here is another testimony of the same character by H. H. Wilson:

> "It is also a melancholy instance of the wrong done to India by the country on which she has

become dependent. It was stated in evidence (in 1813) that the cotton and silk goods of India up to the period could be sold for a profit in the British market at a price from 50 to 60 per cent lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect the latter by duties of 70 and 80 per cent on their value, or by positive prohibition. Had this not been the case, had not such prohibitory duties and decrees existed, the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset, and could scarcely have been again set in motion, even by the power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of the Indian manufacture. Had India been independent, she would have retaliated, would have imposed prohibitive duties upon British goods, and would thus have preserved her own productive industry from annihilation. This act of self-defence was not permitted her; she was at the mercy of the stranger. British goods were forced upon her without paying any duty, and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms."

According to Thomas Munro, "The Company's servants assembled the principal weavers and placed a guard over them until they entered into engagements to supply the Company only."

The author then proceeds:

"When once a weaver accepted advance he seldom got out of his liability. A peon was placed over him to quicken his deliveries if he delayed, and he was liable to be prosecuted in the courts of justice. The sending of a peon meant a fine of one anna (about 1½d.) a day on the weaver, and the peon was armed with a rattan, which was not unoften used to good purpose. Fine was sometimes imposed on the weavers and their brass utensils

were seized for its recovery. The whole weaving population of villages were thus held in subjection to the Company's factories. The control under which the weaver population was held was not merely a matter of practice, but was legalized by Regulations. It was provided that a weaver who had received advances from the Company 'shall on no account give to any other persons whatever, European or Native, either the labour or the produce engaged to the Company;' that on his failing to deliver the stipulated cloths, 'The Commercial Resident shall be at liberty to place peons upon him in order to quicken his deliveries;' that 'on his selling his cloths to others, the weaver shall be liable to be prosecuted in the Dewani Adalat;' that 'weavers, possessed of more than one loom, and entertaining one or more workmen, shall be subject to a penalty of 35 per cent on the stipulated price of every piece of cloth that they may fail to deliver according to the written agreement,' that landlords and tenants 'are enjoined not to hinder the Commercial Residents or their officers from access to weavers;' and that they 'are strictly prohibited from behaving with disrespect to the Commercial Residents of the Company."

Is it to be wondered at if weavers living under such intolerable restraint broke loose from it by cutting off their own thumbs? To revive an industry that was thus deliberately destroyed and which supplemented the resources of millions of people is the sacred duty of every Indian who loves his country, and should be considered a privilege by every Englishman who would repent of the grave wrong done to a great country by his ancestors. But instead of repentance we see a painful persistence in the policy initiated 150 years ago, and an equally painful effort made by every means possible to bolster up the wrong.

Young India, 19-4-1928

83

MILL CLOTH v. KHADI

A friend writes in effect:

> "Several Congressmen are nowadays advocating the use of indigenous mill cloth side by side with khadi. There is a movement to give mill cloth a place in Congress khadi shops. Will you not give your clear opinion on this point? I know what it is, but all Congress workers do not. They would like to have your guidance, especially in view of your recent articles on the part the indigenous mills may play in the boycott movement."

The Congress resolutions on khadi are unequivocal. For those, therefore, who wish to respect them there is no course open but to avoid the use of cloth manufactured in our mills. But in these days of growing anarchy it is idle to quote Congress resolutions either to support or to oppose particular conduct on the part of Congressmen.

Let us, therefore, re-examine the question of Congressmen optionally using indigenous mill cloth in the place of foreign cloth, or hawking such mill cloth. We know the experience of Bengal. The Swadeshi movement of Bengal during the partition days suffered a check because of the greed and dishonesty of mill-owners. They inflated prices and even sold foreign cloth in the name of Swadeshi. There is no warrant for the belief that they would hehave better on this occasion. Indeed the facts about spurious khadi that I have brought to light show that the mills will not be slow to exploit the Swadeshi spirit for their own benefit as opposed to the larger benefit of the consumer.

But even if the mills were to play the game, Congressmen will not need to use mill cloth or to advertise it. The mills playing the game means their advertising and selling khadi, their assimilation of the khadi spirit, their recognition of the predominance of khadi over mill cloth.

It must be definitely realized that mills alone, even if they wished, cannot in our generation displace foreign cloth. Therefore there must be in the country an agency that would devote its attention, so far as boycott of foreign cloth is concerned, exclusively to khadi propaganda. That agency has been the Congress since 1920. Khadi production and khadi propaganda act at once as a check upon the greed of mills and also, strange as it may appear, as an indirect but very effective encouragement to mills in their struggle against foreign competition. Exclusive devotion to khadi on the part of Congressmen enables khadi to find a foothold and enables mills effectively to carry on their operations where the Congress has as yet no influence worth the name. Hence it is that the mills have never resented the khadi propaganda. On the contrary many of their agents have assured me that they have benefited by the khadi propaganda inasmuch as it has created an anti-foreign-cloth atmosphere enabling them to sell their comparatively coarser count cloth. Stop exclusive khadi propaganda, play with mill cloth, and you kill khadi, and in the long run you kill even mill cloth, for it cannot by itself stand foreign competition. In a competition between indigenous and foreign mills the one disturbing factor of healthy mass sentiment would be wholly wanting, if there were no khadi spirit.

Last but not least, the inestimable value of khadi consists in its capacity for tremendous mass education, mass uplift, and substantial relief of growing starvation. Whereas mill cloth affords no work and no financial help to the masses, every yard of khadi means so much work and money to the masses who are being doubly ruined for want of work and wages. Therefore, for every patriotic lover of the country there is no escape from exclusive use of and propaganda of khadi.

Young India, 10-5-1928

84

MORE OF MILL-OWNERS' GREED

The figures I gave the other day of spurious khadi manufactured by our mills were for nine months only. I have now obtained them for ten months. Here are the magic figures:

Figures of the production of khadi, dungri, or khaddar for ten months, April to January:

	1925-26	1926-27	1927-28
Lbs.	2,58,22,442	3,11,95,169	3,70,36,206
Yards	7,32,44,238	8,54,31,611	10,30,61,072

This shows that they manufactured one crore yards per month, meaning at least 20 lakhs of rupees worth of khadi per month. This means a year's output of genuine khadi. This is taking money directly out of the mouths of the poor people through a movement that was designed for helping the starving millions. Baseness could go no further. The mill-owners could have served the country, if they had made common cause with khadi and helped it directly instead of trying to kill it by unfair and dishonest competition. Their action is on a par with that of merchants who sell to a gullible public artificial ghee claiming it as a genuine product. Like the Government they have traded on the ignorance of the people and like all their predecessors in kind they will find, if they do not retrace their steps, that they played the trick once too often. It is possible to fool some people for all times, but it is not possible to fool all the people all the times. It should not be necessary for capital to be dishonest for its growth.

Young India, 10-5-1928

DEADLY MARCH OF CIVILIZATION (?)

"Although at the time of writing (1917) foreign cloths are being imported to a certain extent into the Shan States, it is the custom for all Shan women to weave cloth for their own garments and those of their families. . . The cotton from which the cloths are made is grown locally and prepared by the women. In Shan villages nearly every house has a loom, made sometimes of bamboo, sometimes of heavy wood, and generally kept on the ground in the open space beneath the living rooms. The raw cotton is prepared by drying the balls in the sun, extracting the seeds by passing them through the usual small two-roller gin, and when opening it out by catching the partly cleaned cotton up from the revolving basket in which it is placed, by means of an instrument shaped like the bow of a violincello. After the cotton fibres have been separated in this way they are made into slivers and wound round a stick about 8 inches long and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick, from which the cotton is converted into thread by a form of spinning jenny."—From *Burmese Textiles from the Shan and Kachin Distt. . . Notes from Bank-field Museum* by Laura E. Start, 1917.

But for the hypnotic spell under which the intoxicating education of our times drives us to live, we would consider it a sacrilege to deprive people of their own existing honourable occupation in the distant, vague, and often vain hope of bettering their fleeting material condition. If civilization means change of form merely without regard to substance, it is an article of doubtful value. And yet that is what the foregoing paragraph sent by Shri Balaji Rao means.

Under the guise of the civilizing influence of commerce the innocent people of Burma are being impoverished and reduced to the condition of cattle. As Shri Madhusudan Das has pointed out, people who merely work with cattle and forget the cunning of the hand by giving up handicrafts are impoverished not only in body but also in mind.

Young India, 10-5-1928

86

HOW I DISCOVERED THE SPINNING WHEEL

A friend, who has been studying the All India Spinners' Association organization after having studied a centre in Karaikudi (Tamilnad), writes:

> "This (Uttukuli) is a heavy production centre for hand spinning and weaving. I have half picked up this work here. There are about a thousand spinners. I have gone about the villages and met many of them in their own little cottages. Every day that passes makes me marvel the more as to how you discovered the spinning wheel. I am very much tempted to ask if you could not kindly tell in the pages of *Young India* when and how exactly you rediscovered the wheel. It is so little and so big at the same time. It reminds me of the rain drops—each so tiny by itself but together 'the mighty ocean'. Nothing is more wrong than to think that you have asked India to spin and that India has begun to spin driven to do so by you. The truth is rather that the millions in the villages have driven you to it—to be their agent for disposing of all their yarn. I am daily watching crowds of old women and girls coming with their yarn. They come with smiling faces, their precious yarn clutched to their hearts. And khadi is retouching slowly into life just those vital parts of our national being that have been touched almost into death by this most soulless of exploitations. I realize now as never before the truth of your words when you said that the world will some day accept khadi as the noblest of your works."

He is right when he says that the toiling, starving millions drove me to it. It was in London in 1908 that I discovered the wheel. I had gone there leading a deputation from South Africa. It was then that I came in close touch with many earnest Indians—students and others. We had many long conversations about the condition of India, and I saw as in a flash that without the spinning wheel there was no Swaraj. I knew at once that everyone had to spin. But I did not then know the distinction between the loom and the wheel, and in *Hind Swaraj* used the word loom to mean the wheel. This is what I have said in the concluding chapter of the booklet:

> "We will get nothing by asking; we shall have to take what we want, and we need the requisite strength for the effort, and that strength will be available to him only who
>
> *   *   *
>
> 2. "If a lawyer, will give up his profession and take up a hand-loom (spinning wheel);
>
> *   *   *
>
> 8. "although a doctor, will take up a hand-loom (spinning wheel);
>
> *   *   *
>
> 10. "If a wealthy man, will devote his money to establishing hand-looms (spinning wheels), and encourage others to use hand-made goods by wearing them himself;"

The words are as true today as they were in 1908 when the booklet was written. Today not only are lawyers, doctors and others spinning by way of sacrifice but they are also organizing the movement. But alas, they are yet far too few for the purpose of waking the millions from their helpless lethargy. The vast majority are still standing aside. They seem to be waiting for a catastrophe greater than the one that is happening in front of them. They seem to await

the simultaneous destruction of millions to produce in them a shock that would move them to action. Be that as it may, there is no organic Swaraj until the starving millions feel its glow. They will not feel it until a living contact is established between them and us the vocal class who literally bleed them in order that we may live.

But to return to the wheel. Though the wheel was discovered to the mental vision in 1908, it saw work only in 1918, after three years' patient and strenuous effort. The first khadi vow (very much adulterated to suit the fashionable sisters of Bombay) was taken in 1919. The wheel found a place in the Congress programme in 1921. The history of the movement since then is an open book, still being written in the lives of the two thousand spinners in whose lives the wheel has brought a ray of hope. Were we not under the hypnotic and desolating spell of the city civilization, we would realize through our hearts that only a little combined, conscious and honest effort in the shape of work is required to take the wheel to every cottage in India. Multiply the return of one wheel by, say, one hundred million, and the result will convince the most confirmed unbeliever of its potency. But probably he will refuse to be willing and say, 'What you say is true as an arithmetical problem. It is wholly untrue as a practical proposition. You can only take a willing horse to the trough. But a true spinner must have unlimited patience. He does not give in. The answer to the question propounded by the friend, therefore, perhaps should be: 'The wheel is still being discovered.' I know that it shall be one day, for there are some in this country who are prepared to pay for the discovery with their lives.

Young India, 20-9-1928

87

MISTAKEN HUMANITY?

Shri Jamshed Mehta is rightly accepted as the truest man of Karachi. Almost every good public movement there claims him as its own. He devotes practically the whole of his time to public movements. He is one of the best representatives of Theosophy. His honesty and independence are as unquestioned as his patriotism. When, therefore, such a man commits an error of judgment or runs counter to public opinion, his friends feel sore at heart. Shri Jamshed Mehta, who is the President of the Karachi Municipality, seems to me to have committed an error of judgment. Though a lover of khadi, he recently felt called upon to move on behalf of an absentee member a resolution about khadi which drew forth very strong opposition from the members. Another matter was his attitude about a product that has been introduced from Europe into India as vegetable ghee.

Many common friends have drawn my attention to the controversy that has been going on in Karachi on these topics and invited me to express my own views on them, I suppose, in the hope that they may either influence the President who knows my regard for him, or if they do not influence him, may at least prevent some of the Karachi public from being misled into wrong action owing to what the correspondents consider to be the erroneous views of the popular President. Whether my views produce any such influence or not, the opinions on these questions of Shri Jamshed Mehta deserve a patient and respectful examination.

He tells me that he moved the khadi resolution in order to test the feeling of the Municipality, and withdrew it when he saw that the members were opposed to it. I copy the resolution and the argument from the local press:

"This Corporation resolves to cancel its resolution No. 304 dated 2nd July 1924 because compulsory purchase and use of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar in all cases have frequently resulted in pure waste of municipal money in different departments of the Municipality."

"In moving the above resolution, the President at the outset assured the house that he himself was actually in favour of popularizing the use of khadi, and that during the last three years the Corporation had spent not less than one lakh of rupees for encouraging this cottage industry. But his honest opinion was that the poor menials wearing khadi supplied by the Corporation were undergoing great hardships. The Councillors were doing great injustice to themselves and to the rate-payers by spending such an enormous amount on khadi which did the wearers little good. It was really a cruelty to ask the sweepers to wear this heavy cloth and go in the streets. Moreover white khadi became dirty soon, and the poor peons had to spend a lot of money for washing. Colour was tried but found useless. The Corporation could give only two suits, and they had to suffer much for keeping them clean. The President emphatically observed: 'I tell you it is really a cruelty. We have spent nearly a lakh of rupees, but Rs. 85,000 is really wasted. Our purpose has not been served. Unless and until we give them better and lighter khadi of a superior quality at double the present cost, we should not think of giving khadi suits. The stuff we are now giving our peons is enough to bring tears in one's eyes."

Let us examine this argument. In judging the municipal employees as he did by his own standard, I feel, the President has done the employees and the cause of khadi a serious injustice. His judgment is very like that of a delicate lady judging the appetite

of her weather-beaten guests by her own, or like that of an ant measuring out a few particles of flour to the elephant and feeling that she had meted out to her guest an exact measure — we know that the measure in each case would be false. The delicate lady and the ant would be right in their measure if they had guests of the same species finding themselves in the same circumstances.

In the Karachi case, the measure adopted by the President is wrong because the municipal employees have not been delicately brought up like the mover of the resolution. The President's measure is doubly false, first because the sweepers do not need the same fineness in their dress material as the President, and secondly because they do not want the same style of dress which educated Indians have from fear, ignorance or ambition imitated from the rulers. I venture to suggest that the Councillors should revise their notions of decency and equip their employees with garments of a style in keeping with the climate and the manners of the country. They need not then fear to use the coarsest khadi. And they will save municipal money, promote the comfort of the employees, revive true art, and will at the same time serve the poorest of their countrymen whom they cannot reach save through khadi. If the President would do unto the employees as he would that they should do unto him, let him for a moment step into their shoes and see how he would feel and his measure would be right.

But assuming that the employees must have an unnatural uniform in order to suit municipal vanity, it is not difficult to pick up fine khadi nowadays if the Municipality will pay the price, nor is it impossible to have khaki-coloured khadi for the purpose.

The cheapest and the most patriotic method will be to train the girls and the boys of the municipal schools and for the Councillors to train themselves to

spin fine yarn and have it woven locally. The other citizens will then copy the patriotic and industrious example of the Councillors, and if, say, one-third Karachi devoted only half an hour to philanthropic spinning, there would be many times more than enough khadi to clothe the employees.

One valid objection may be taken to this course being adopted, namely that khadi thus produced will not support the paupers in whose interest it has been recommended to public corporations. Whilst the objection is sound so far as it goes, it must not be forgotten that, if any city takes up spinning in the manner suggested by me, it will be very substantial though indirect service of pauper India in that the moral effect of such sacrificial spinning will be so pervading that there will be produced a spinning atmosphere that would make the irresponsive masses take to it for supplementing their present income which is admitted to be altogether inadequate for human sustenance. Where the average daily income is less than seven pice, the addition of even one pice per day will be a princely addition.

But this may be treated as counsel of perfection not worthy of consideration by practical businessmen. Anyway I know that the idealist President will not dismiss my suggestion quite so summarily. But for those who will not seriously and scientifically organize home spinning in the manner suggested, I submit that no expense incurred for khadi need be considered as waste, no discomfort suffered on its account too much, when it is borne in mind that every pice spent upon khadi goes directly into the pockets of the needy, and that even of this at least 85 per cent goes into the pockets of the poorest artisans including the semi-starved spinners.

But says the President: "Why not supply the employees with uniform made of Swadeshi mill cloth and save over sixty per cent of the price paid for

khadi?" This is an argument I had least expected from Shri Jamshed Mehta, the friend of the poor. Surely, if every Municipality gave a bounty of 60 per cent to khadi, it would not be wrong to do so, assuming that it had the power so to do.

And I have repeatedly shown in these pages that there can be no comparison between khadi and mill cloth, even as there can be none between the home-made chapati, however costly it may be and troublesome to make, and cheap, easily prepared, machine-made biscuit. Mill cloth needs no protection or patronage from the public in the sense that khadi does. Indian mill cloth gets preference as it ought to when khadi is unavailable at any cost, when machine-made cloth becomes a necessity, and when the choice lies only between foreign cloth and Swadeshi mill cloth. Khadi, it is clear, must displace both. Khadi has no established market like mill cloth. It has not even become as yet a bazar article. Every yard of khadi bought means at least eightyfive per cent in the mouths of the starving and the poor ones of India. Every yard of mill cloth bought means more than 75 per cent in the pockets of the capitalists and less than 25 per cent in the pockets of the labourers who are never helpless, who are well able to take care of themselves, and who never starve or need starve in the sense that the helpless millions starve for whose sake khadi has been conceived. Indeed I should be surprised if the municipal employees, whose supposed discomfort owing to wearing coarse khadi has moved the humanitarian Shri Jamshed Mehta to action, would not, if they were informed of the great national importance of khadi, themselves prefer it to Swadeshi mill cloth, however comfortable the latter may be to wear. Khadi, in my opinion, is cheap at any cost so long as it functions to find work for, and through work feed, the millions.

Young India, 4-10-1928

HOW WE LOST INDIA

It was at Jalpaiguri just before Deshbandhu's death that I said to a mercantile audience, in reply to an address from the merchants, that we had lost India through merchants and that we should regain it also through them. If illustrations of the truth of this statement were wanted, a striking one is furnished by the following circular letter from a mercantile association to other similar bodies:

> "As you are aware, trade in Manchester piece-goods and yarn has much gone down in recent times and is still showing a marked tendency to decrease. It has been noticed that businessmen are not taking as keen an interest in this trade as they used to do formerly. As a result of this indifference, our country-men are steadily losing what was, as it still may be, a source of great profit and income to them. The Marwari community, along with other commercial communities, being very greatly interested in piecegoods and yarn trade, my Committee adopted a resolution in their meeting of the 7th instant to fully investigate into the causes of its depression with a view to taking definite steps for the rehabilitation of this important branch of trade.
>
> As the matter is one of general interest, my Committee consider it advisable to meet the representatives of different public bodies interested in the trade in a conference in order to take concerted action if possible.
>
> If this proposal meets with the acceptance of your Chamber, as my Committee hope it will, they will be glad to arrange for a conference of representatives of the different public bodies as soon as

possible. The favour of an early reply is, therefore, solicited."

The circular is dated 19th July, 1928. I do not know the outcome of the effort. We are, however, just now not concerned with its result. The fact that there should be in our midst respectable bodies of merchants engaged in devising means for sustaining the trade in Manchester yarn and piecegoods, at a time when the whole country is trying to boycott all foreign cloth, is a portent which should be taken notice of by every national worker.

Enough evidence has been adduced from time to time in these pages that India is held by the English for their commerce, and that by far the largest imports consist of piecegoods. Surely no committee or commission is required to prove that, so long as this exploitation of our country is permitted by us, India will be held by the British by every means at their disposal. What we need, therefore, above all is not so much conversion or expulsion of the British residents or rulers as the conversion of our own merchant princes and their dependants who are selling their country for their own interest.

Nor need our merchant princes ruin themselves for the sake of the country. India will want all the quantity of the cloth and yarn that they are now importing. They have but to apply their undoubted ability to the manufacture of this quantity in our seven hundred thousand villages. In doing so they will naturally benefit themselves. I admit that they will have to give up commercial gambling, speculation, and palaces out of all proportion to their surroundings, and be satisfied with an income bearing some relation to the condition of those for whom and with whom they would trade. In other words, instead of taking part as they are now doing in bleeding the villages, they would be making some tardy return to those on whom their prosperity has depended. The

story of the belly and the members has an eternal application. The toiling millions are the belly. The merchants and others are the members. They must wither if the belly is starved. Those who have eyes can see that the belly has been shamefully starved for a long enough period. The withering of the members must follow soon as night follows day. Let us then repent before it is too late.

Young India, 25-10-1928

IN TEN YEARS?

Professor C. N. Vakil's instructive articles published in these pages are supplementary to the series he recently wrote on poverty and should be read together. I coaxed him to give the reader something more definite on remedies of poverty than what he had done in the article which I ventured to withhold and which he expanded into the four articles above referred to. I do not think that the programme sketched by the learned Professor can be finished in ten years. Perhaps it is impossible to devise a ten years' programme of improvement to cover a vast and impoverished country like ours.

Let us, however, glance at Professor Vakil's remedies for India's central disease. He rightly says that the problem is how to increase production of wealth and how to distribute it equitably among the people, principally, therefore, I presume, among the starving millions. To this end the learned writer

1. would recast small uneconomic holdings,

2. would pay off the debts of the ryot through mortgage and co-operative banks,

3. would revise the revenue law and graduate the land tax so as to bring it in a line with the income tax leaving a minimum of income from land free of tax,

4. would re-employ the population displaced through the recasting of uneconomic holdings by bringing under the plough cultivable waste, i. e. 23 per cent of the total area available, and by nationalizing and thus developing large industries,

5. would draw small and large capital by putting the banking system on a basis more in keeping with the requirements of the country than it is now,

6. would improve labour conditions so as to avoid war between capital and labour,

7. would deal with such social abuses as child marriages etc. which give rise to overpopulation and unfit progeny,

8. would radically reform the educational system so as to spread education among the masses and have it answer the needs of the people,

9. and would cut down the military expenditure and stop the drain from the country by manning the services with indigenous talent.

This is not an unattractive programme. But as I was re-reading the articles, the question continued to force itself upon me, 'Who will bell the cat?' There is hardly an item here which can be tackled without Government aid. And a Government that is admittedly based on exploitation of the governed will not and cannot, even if it will, undertake the proposed changes with the despatch necessary to create an immediate impression. It can undertake irrigation schemes costing crores; it will not undertake sinking wells costing lakhs. What, therefore, Professor Vakil wants first is a summary programme of Swaraj, and having been chiefly instrumental in getting it, he can command the appointment of the commissioner of banishment of poverty department.

This, however, is a heroic remedy, and Pandit Motilal Nehru and the co-signatories to his report are the men to tackle it. Our author's was but to place a scheme before any Government that would deal with the most pressing problem before the country.

But I had hoped that the learned Professor, especially when he wrote for *Young India*, would have examined the one sovereign remedy that has in season and out of season been advocated through these pages and has, so far as it has gone, been tried with no inconsiderable success. True, the Professor has hidden the tiny wheel in a little unseen arc of his circle of suggestions. I claim for it not a point in a circumference but the centre from which can radiate

innumerable other things including many the learned writer has in view. But the fact is, whereas it was possible for him with patient research carried on in a well-stocked library to write convincing essays to prove India's deep and deepening poverty, it was impossible without a close study of a group of villages with an open and receptive mind to spot the seat of the disease and to know the capacity of the patient to bear the remedy. A Gregg took a year of reading and living among the villagers to know the remedy and prove its worth with a freshness of outlook all his own. The cardinal facts to realize are that there is already terrible forced unemployment among the toiling millions in that they have no work for at least four months in the year. Once that is realized, surely it follows that not a moment should be lost in bringing work to these millions so as to utilize their idle hours. The other fact to realize is that, if the average income of the inhabitant of this land is seven pice per day, i. e. less than two English pennies per day, at the present rate of exchange, the average income of the toiling millions must *ipso facto* be much less. He who adds two pice per day to their income, and that without any great capital outlay, makes a princely addition to their income, and in addition revives the dying hope within the breasts of these millions. The further merit of this programme is that it is now in operation without Government aid. But it needs much greater encouragement and admits of infinite expansion. I invite the economists of India to study the movement on the spot. They have nearly two thousand villages to select from for their study. Let them then condemn the movement if they can, or give it not a niggardly place that prudence or patronage can grudgingly afford, but the central place it deserves.

Young India, 1-11-1928

FOREIGN v. SWADESHI

Q. What is your opinion about the importation of foreign goods other than cloth into India? Are there any foreign commodities which you would like to see immediately laid under prohibition? What do you think should be the nature of India's foreign trade in the future?

A. I am more or less indifferent with regard to trade in foreign goods other than cloth. I have never been an advocate of prohibition of all things foreign because they are foreign. My economic creed is a complete taboo in respect of all foreign commodities whose importation is likely to prove harmful to our indigenous interests. This means that we may not in any circumstance import a commodity that can be adequately supplied from our own country. For instance, I would regard it a sin to import Australian wheat on the score of its better quality, but I would not have the slightest hesitation in importing oatmeal from Scotland, if an absolute necessity for it is made out, because we do not grow oats in India. In other words, I would not countenance the boycott of a single foreign article out of ill-will or a feeling of hatred. Or to take up a reverse case, India produces a sufficient quantity of leather; it is my duty, therefore, to wear shoes made out of Indian leather only, even if it is comparatively dearer and of an inferior quality in preference to cheaper and superior quality foreign leather shows. Similarly I would condemn the introduction of foreign molasses or sugar if enough of it is produced in India for our needs. It will be thus clear from the above that it is hardly possible for me to give an exhaustive catalogue of foreign articles whose importation in India ought to be prohibited. I have simply inculcated the general principle by which we can be guided in all such cases. And this principle will hold good in future too so long as the conditions of production in our country remain as they are today.

Young India, 15-11-1928

91

AMERICAN PATRIOTISM

Shri C. V. Rangam Chetty writes:

" Rev. — is the head of the American Mission schools at — . He deputed Mr. — , who was an Indian teacher in the mission school at — and who knows mechanism, to go to — and bring materials for his motor car. Mr. — purchased German material which is cheaper and better than the American. Rev. — refused to touch it, and said that he would not like to pay his money so far as possible to any nation except America. Mr. — then sold the material to a Brahman gentleman at — and purchased American material. Mr. — , who was indifferent to my repeated requests to wear khaddar, has now come forward to confess his folly and has resolved to wear khaddar in future after this incident. I hope our educated and rich countrymen will take a lesson from the American and set an example to others."

I have purposely omitted names and places as they are not germane to my theme. The point is quite clear. Whether the reverend gentleman referred to did not overstep the limit of patriotism is not the point to be examined. The lesson Shri Rangam Chetty wishes to draw from the incident is quite legitimate. We, in our country, are in honour bound to prefer hand-spun khaddar to foreign cloth, no matter how inconvenient it may be to us. It is flimsy philosophy that teaches us to go to the cheapest market irrespective of what happens therethrough to our next door neighbours. Free donations of fine wheat from Australia or America would be poison to us, if that

meant a workless India with her soil growing weeds instead of golden grain. Similarly a free gift of cloth from Manchester would be too costly a bargain for India to accept. I repeat, therefore, that khaddar is cheap at any price so long as it serves to utilize the idle hours of the nation, and there is nothing else immediately in view to occupy them as usefully.

Young India, 17-1-1929

92

FOREIGN CLOTH AND KHADI

The Working Committee of the Congress has passed a resolution asking me to frame a scheme for carrying out the Congress programme regarding boycott of foreign cloth through khadi. The scheme as submitted by me to the Secretary is published elsewhere (Ch. 93; p. 292). I commend it to the careful attention of the reader and invite him to offer suggestions for its improvement. In my opinion boycott of foreign cloth is a comparatively easy thing to accomplish, if Congressmen would concentrate upon the effort with a will. In order to enable them to do so a living faith in khadi is an absolute necessity. If Congressmen still need conversion, the scheme cannot be carried out. I warned the Congress delegates as earnestly as I could against passing the resolution if they had no faith in the programme. Notwithstanding the warning they passed the resolution without dissent and without protest. That presupposes faith in khadi. If they have it, the scheme is capable of being worked. Let it be thoroughly understood that it is not possible to accomplish the boycott through any other means. Let no one worry about the place of the indigenous mill cloth in the boycott. This cloth has taken care of itself and will take care of itself. What we need to do is to clothe with khadi those whom we reach. If we speak with two voices, we shall fail in carrying out the boycott. We shall succeed only in inflating the prices of indigenous mill cloth and in tempting unscrupulous mill-owners to commit frauds upon a gullible public.

Finally I draw the attention of all concerned to my note at the foot of the scheme. No progress in the prosecution of the Congress programme is possible unless the Congress house is put in order and becomes the living structure that it was in 1921.

Young India, 24-1-1929

SCHEME FOR BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH THROUGH KHADI

1. Congress organizations should call for volunteers to go from door to door in every town and village having a Congress committee and collect foreign cloth in the possession of the householders, and deliver or receive orders for khadi required by such householders.

2. All khadi should bear the stamp of the All India Spinners' Association, and prices should be distinctly marked on them.

3. Voluntary preachers should be called for to popularize the use of khadi and to advocate complete boycott of foreign cloth.

Note: Volunteers and preachers should know genuine from spurious khadi.

4. Foreign cloth collected should be publicly burnt wherever possible.

5. Foreign cloth dealers should be individually visited with a view to enlisting their help and inducing them to stop further purchase of foreign cloth and to cancel all cancellable orders.

6. Picketing of foreign cloth shops may be undertaken wherever possible and where there is no danger of violence being committed by Congress pickets, the latter being reliable and seasoned volunteers.

7. All units should from day to day report to the Central Office details of work done in terms of the foregoing, and the latter should circulate to the press for publication a weekly digest of day-to-day progress.

8. Help and co-operation of all political and other organizations should be solicited in the campaign.

9. Help of patriotic ladies should be enlisted to prosecute the boycott campaign.

10. The All India Spinners' Association should be asked to furnish the Central Office with a list of places where genuine khadi is available and to open stores where there is a demand for khadi.

11. A small committee called the Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee should be formed and entrusted with an initial fund with power to collect more funds. The Committee should be under obligation to publish duly audited statements of income and expenditure every quarter.

12. The Committee proposed in para 11 should publish and distribute broadcast leaflets showing the necessity and possibility of boycott, giving full details as to the method of achieving it by individuals.

13. Resolutions should be moved in the provincial legislatures as well as the central, calling upon their respective Governments to make all their cloth purchases in khadi irrespective of its so-called costliness. Resolutions should also be moved demanding a prohibitive duty on imports of foreign cloth.

Note : The foregoing scheme is based upon the assumption that the Congress committees all over India will be immediately reorganized, and that there will be handsome response to the call for membership, and that there will be full co-operation on the part of all Congress committees in the prosecution of the campaign of boycott of foreign cloth through khadi. It is suggested that, if these conditions are fulfilled, it is possible to achieve this boycott during the year, at any rate to the extent of making a visible impression upon the imports of foreign cloth.

Young India, 24-1-1929

94
FOREIGN CLOTH BOYCOTT

It is a matter of great pleasure to me, as I hope it is to every nationalist, that Shri Jairamdas has been able promptly to respond to my call on behalf of the Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee to take up its Secretaryship and as a necessary corollary to give up his seat in the Bombay Legislative Council. Jairamdas is not a man to take up a cause he does not believe in. His coming, therefore, as a whole-time worker is, in my opinion, a great gain to the movement. If the public will similarly respond to the call that will be made upon them from time to time by the Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee, the country will be able to show a definite advance inside of a few months. Given popular determination, boycott is a matter of careful organization.

Two things will have to go together — sale and production of khadi. The moment there is a real intention on the part of the public for boycott of foreign cloth, there will be a great rush for khadi. If production does not anticipate the demand for khadi, there is danger of a severe disappointment and a consequent loss of faith in the possibility of boycott for mere want of khadi. It is, therefore, necessary for the public not to purchase more khadi than they need. They should try to cut down their rations as far as possible.

I am studiously silent about the indigenous mills. It is my firm belief that mills, by reason of the limitations under which they must work, will fail us in the end if we rely upon them. Then they, being concerns predominantly for making profits irrespective of national considerations, will not scruple to exploit the public and even to sell foreign cloth as Swadeshi.

I have already exposed in these pages the fraudulent sale of mill cloth under the name of khadi. Lastly, all mills are not Swadeshi because they have their habitation in India, as the existing Government is not Swadeshi for the mere fact of its habitation being in India. Some of them are foreign in every sense of the term. They are administered by foreigners on behalf exclusively of foreign shareholders with foreign capital. They are here merely to exploit the resources of the country. The only thing they reluctantly contribute is to employ the cheap labour of the country and make a gullible public believe that these are Swadeshi concerns.

But this does not mean that the mills will play no part in the boycott campaign. They will, but it will be involuntary and fortuitous. Congressmen will not be able at once to reach every village of India. We will reach the towns and the villages surrounding them. The mills reach every village of India. The atmosphere created in the country will throw the villagers into the arms of the mill-owners' agents, and they will buy whatever is given to them by the mills under the name of Swadeshi. Congressmen will have to be on the watch regarding their operations. There are some patriotic mills which will refuse to betray the country even if they cannot by reason of their limitations give active support. My conviction is that a time must come, and that within a few months, when the mills will have to make their choice and accept the terms that were offered to them last year. But it will wholly depend upon the determination of the people to boycott foreign cloth at any cost and replace it by genuine khadi. Khadi has no limits. For we have millions of human spindles and lakhs of human looms. The one thing needful is the will to do it.

Young India, 7-3-1929

95

CHARKHA AS SECONDARY OCCUPATION

I have before me a copy of the paper on secondary occupations read by Rao Bahadur S. S. Talmaki, Hon. Secretary, Provincial Co-operative Institute, Bombay. It is an exhaustive paper containing an examination of most occupations that have from time to time been suggested as capable of being introduced as secondary occupations for the villagers. He rejects some and accepts some as possible. Among the possible and promising secondary occupations he mentions hand-spinning, and devotes to it paragraphs which are worthy of careful study by sceptics. I reproduce them below:

> "It is, therefore, premature to think of introducing weaving as a secondary occupation even for a small number of agriculturists, unless and until cheap yarn is made available at their doors and marketing of finished goods is organized on sound lines.
>
> We have, however, to explore the possibilities of every available industry to supply a secondary occupation capable of employing the vast spare time and energy of the farmers, which at present run into waste. The only possible industry falling under the category of clothing is hand-spinning. It can be made a useful adjunct of every farmer family in the country and is best suited to famine areas, giving useful occupation when all others have failed. Even if the adult males wish to migrate temporarily in search of a more remunerative occupation, the women and children can ply the charkha without difficulty and without much technical skill. There can be no caste prejudice against its use, and in fact before the

advent of the machine-made yarn the womenfolk of the farmer families supplied the country's yarn. The charkha requires very little initial capital and will occupy a small corner of the cottage.

The service which the charkha rendered in days of yore is not denied. But various objections are raised to its capacity as a secondary occupation for agriculturists under the present conditions. The first objection is the low income which it yields, amounting to not more than a couple of annas a day. But is not something better than nothing? Even agriculture itself does not yield to the average farmer more than Rs. 50 a year, which comes to not much above annas two per day. Yet no one on that account will dare to advise the abandonment of agriculture. Another objection is that the yarn produced does not find a ready market. But this difficulty can be got over by producing yarn in each village just sufficient for its own requirements. The third objection is that the farmer nowadays being accustomed to the finer varieties of cloth will not care to purchase the coarse khadi in preference to the former. But when the farmer produces his own cloth in his own home, no case arises of his purchasing it in the shop, and therefore the question of giving preference to one or the other does not arise. Thus, if the scope of the hand-spinning industry in the case of agriculturists be limited to the production of yarn sufficient for the requirements of the village people, the difficulty of finding a market for the produce will not arise. Every farmer will be proud to wear the cloth produced by his own labour, however rough it may be. To persuade a person to purchase khadi may be difficult, but little persuasion will be required for using an article produced by himself. Nor will the question of a subsidy arise, which some advocates of khadi are pleading for, so long as the questions of sale, purchase and preference

are avoided. Moreover it is not as easy to get a subsidy as it is to ask for it. In order to effect maximum saving and to give a little more work to the village, the preliminary processes of ginning and carding must be done there, preferably in each family. The weaving of the yarn should also be done in the village, not individually, but by placing the work in the hands of one or two families. It will give them full-time occupation and enable them to specialize in the art. Perhaps it would be advisable to pay for the work in kind, preferably by yarn. Gudars, i. e. thick and strong coloured cloth used as carpets, and inferior carpets used in villages can also be manufactured by the village weavers with thick home-spun yarn. With these possibilities before us, it is very difficult to ignore or despise an industry capable of affording clothing to the whole village population, and of giving full-time occupation to a couple of additional families as weavers, and yet another family of carpenters in each village within its own precincts.

Wherever hand-spinning with weaving is introduced with success, the desirability of eliminating some work of drudgery must be considered, so as to reserve more time and energy for spinning and its incidental work. For example, flour-grinding, which occupies a large time of the womenfolk, can be done at a common mill for the village driven by a pair of bullocks, as is successfully done in the villages of the district of Gurgaon in the Punjab through the efforts of Mr. Brayne. In fact, manufacture of cloth in the village for the village might bring about much improvement in the rural life, for which there is little scope at present for want of funds. It might be possible, in course of time, even to shorten the time taken for spinning itself, by further improvement of the charkha, which is sure to come if the industry becomes national, or by the

addition of a contrivance to produce two to three threads by a single wheel in place of the one it produces at present. This step towards the improvement of yarn and its rapid production is essential from another point of view, if the ultimate aim of the movement to supply yarn to the present hand-loom weavers is to be realized. One great handicap in the way of these industrious people is that the mills having obtained a monopoly of yarn sell it to them at a very high price in order to enable themselves to sell mill-made cloth at a cheaper rate. If the charkha propaganda is to succeed, it must be directed to the villages with greater vigour and a more thoroughgoing organization than in the case of towns. The support of the townspeople requires to be propped up by enthusiasm from time to time, whereas in the case of the village it is a question of self-preservation. Though work in the rural areas will be difficult at the start on account of the illiteracy and apathy of the people, yet once its possibilities will be realized, it is sure to take a deeper root there. In order, however, to ensure success and avoid failure, the propaganda must be carried on, not by uniformed enthusiasts but by persons who have gone through the technique of hand-spinning, which may not take more than a couple of months to master. If in addition to this they are also trained for about three to six months in the breeding and feeding of cattle and the methods of raising fodder and its preservation by silage, they will be capable of rendering double service to the villagers.

Hand-spinning coupled with weaving, if introduced in the Indian villages, is capable of producing vast social and economic benefits. The average per capita consumption of cloth in India is estimated at 15 yards per year. Taking only ten yards to be the per capita consumption in the case of villagers

for a conservative basis, and the total number of rural population at 288 millions according to the census of 1921, the total cloth required by them would be 2,880 million yards. If by an extensive and systematic propaganda the villagers are encouraged to produce their own cloth, all the money they pay for it will remain in the villages. Taking the cost of khadi cloth at the minimum of annas four per yard, the total saving effected by the villages would be 72 crores of rupees per year. Over and above this, the price they have to pay in cash for purchasing cloth from the market should be taken into consideration. That price is not less than 6 to 8 as. per yard. Taking again the lower figure, the additional saving effected by home production at as. 2 per yard would amount to another 36 crores of rupees per year. Thus there will remain in the villages more than one hundred crores of rupees every year on a very conservative basis, and if even a part of it be made available, as it is sure to be, for the work of rural uplift, such as education, sanitation, medical relief, and also the improvement of the cattle and agriculture itself, the condition of rural life can be ameliorated at rapid strides.

Over and above this, take into consideration the great increase in the purchasing power resulting by the reform, amongst so large a number of people, opening up a vast market for the large scale industries that might be started in the country. Manufacture of the market is a more difficult and yet a more important task than the manufacture of goods. Many an industry of the factory type has remained unexploited in the country for want of a market. They can expect very little scope in the foreign market which has been already captured by the industrially advanced foreign countries. Even in the case of backward countries a consciousness of their own possibilities is rapidly growing. The creation of a

home market is, therefore, of paramount importance for the industrial advancement of the country. The simple charkha offers this possibility, and it should not, therefore, be treated as negligible."

The Rao Bahadur is probably aware that the All India Spinners' Association is concentrating its attention on organizing hand-spinning in the villages on the self-sufficient basis suggested by him. I commend to his attention the examples of Bijolia and Bardoli. At the same time the towns may not be neglected. So much is town life now dominating the villages that, unless the towns set fashion in khadi, it becomes most difficult to persuade the villagers to spin even in their own interest and just enough for their own use. Nor is the question of cost quite so simple as the Rao Bahadur imagines. The cotton speculator and the foreign buyer have so disturbed cotton prices and cotton-growing that the villager often finds it apparently cheaper to buy cloth than to pay for cotton and for weaving. Strange as it may appear, it sometimes happens that the cost of a yard of foreign cloth equals the cost of weaving and not unoften even the cost of cotton required for an equal length of hand-woven cloth. I may not go into these intricacies. As a practical spinner I point out the difficulty of the task when there is no State aid and even subtle and subterranean opposition and always indifference to it. Hence the necessity in the initial stage for subsidy and town patronage. Moreover, in these days of democracy, the villagers will not understand the philosophy and the truth of khadi if a distinction is drawn between towns and villages. Lastly, since pioneers must be found from the towns, a khadi atmosphere in them is an absolute necessity for nationalizing the reform whose need the Rao Bahadur has so convincingly demonstrated.

Young India, 7-3-1929

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FUNCTION OF KHADI

An Agra friend asks:

> "Do you want to perpetuate the use of khadi, or do you recommend it only for temporary use for acquiring political freedom? In the former case, does not khadi offend against aesthetics? And do you expect common people to stifle the natural grievance of the sense?"

I do indeed seek to perpetuate khadi because it is the only means of saving the peasantry from extinction. I claim for it the ability to give the peasantry its economic freedom and, what is more, to enable the peasantry to keep the wolf from the door. The correspondent is obviously ignorant of the past history of his own country and the present evolution of khadi. When the other parts of the globe did not know the use of cotton, India set the aesthetic standard and supplied the rich nations of the West with the finest fabrics in a variety of colours. And the present evolution of khadi shows that slowly but surely it is day by day reaching the aesthetically inclined people. After all, true art can only be expressed not through inanimate power-driven machinery designed for mass production, but only through the delicate living touch of the hands of men and women. I commend the correspondent to Acharya Kripalani's pupils and associates who are making extensive experiments in beautifying khadi.

This correspondent has also raised the question of the so-called dearness of khadi. I have not dealt with it because it has already been dealt with in these columns.

Young India, 14-3-1929

FALLACY OF FAVOURABLE BALANCES

A Hungarian professor asked me the other day to reconcile my statement about the growing poverty of India with her recurring favourable balance of trade. The professor had not gone beyond the cities of India, and his knowledge was naturally based upon the usual statistics. The information derived from the statistics was enforced by the apparently prosperous appearance of the cities he had seen.

The honest doubt entertained by the learned professor is not improbably shared by many who study the orthodox economics in the orthodox manner. It may be, therefore, worth while reproducing the gist of my reply for what it may be worth. Suppose, I argued, that a country was owned by a certain number of slave-holders who compelled their slaves to grow food grains and other articles of value to the world, who paid them hardly enough to keep the wolf from the door, and themselves made enormous profits out of the grain thus grown and exported; suppose, further, that the total of these exports of grain etc. was greater than the total imports of this country; the favourable trade balance would be no test of the prosperity of its people in general. It could exist side by side with the growing poverty and degradation of the slaves. I suggested to the professor that the position of India was not far removed from the slave-ridden country imagined. I therefore argued that, in order accurately to understand the hidden meaning of the recurring favourable balances, it was necessary to study the conditions of certain typical villages in India and to see also the villagers face to face. Of what use, I told him, could an all-India favourable balance be to

the villagers, if they did not reap the fruits thereof and if the villages betrayed, as I held they did, a process of continuing exhaustion?

The late Dadabhai Naoroji showed by telling figures how the wealth of India was drained away from year to year owing to the foreign rulers living their more than princely lives practically outside India even whilst they were nominally and physically living in India. The favourable balance of India represents the continual bleeding process to which she is subjected in order to sustain a rule which is based not upon the goodwill of the people but upon a show of force which is kept up at an extraordinary expense of which a large part goes out of India.

It has been truly said by economists themselves that statistics can be made to prove two contradictory propositions. It is therefore necessary for a prudent man, who is not concerned with merely proving a preconceived proposition but who is concerned solely with finding the truth, to probe beneath statistics and test independently every proposition deduced from them. It is no doubt good to know the average depth of a river, but a non-swimmer who, on learning that its average depth is below his height, attempts to ford it is likely to find a watery grave. Even so will a man lose reputation for sanity who relies upon the mirage of statistics dressed up for him. Just as a man who would ford a river must know its highest and its lowest depth, even so should a man desirous to make a valid use of statistical abstracts have access to the underlying figures and know how to handle them. But the average man has neither the time nor the ability to study bewildering figures. For him the real test is the experience of the village life, if he would know the condition of real India. Such experience cannot be belied by any statistical jugglery.

Eye-witnesses, including English administrators whose interest it would be to find the contrary, have

testified that India has been growing poorer under the British regime. Go to the villages, and you will find misery and despair written in the faces of the inhabitants. Both they and their cattle are underfed; mortality is on the increase; they have no resisting power when disease overtakes them. It is well known that malaria is not a disease to dread if one has quinine and a good supply of pure milk. Yet malaria carries away thousands of villagers year by year. They may have quinine thrown at them, but they cannot get milk for the convalescent period. Their indebtedness is increasing. It is a blasphemy to impute it to marriage expenses and the like. These are no new charge on their dwindling purse. The story of hoarded wealth and conversion of silver coin into ornaments is a fable. Millions have and had no silver or gold ornaments. They wear hideous wooden, even stone, bangles and rings which interfere with their free movement and undermine their health. Their illiteracy is, if anything, on the increase. These are no signs of growing prosperity.

Now let us glance at the nature of exports and imports. The exports in 1927-28 were Rs. 309 crores, the imports over Rs. 231 crores. The exports were principally raw products, e. g. cotton, food grains, oil seeds, hides and skins, metals and ores. These could have remained in India if we had skill and capital enough to put into them or if we had a Government that would regard it as its bounden duty to give us the necessary skill and to find the necessary capital. The story of India's exports is a story of our impotence and the criminal indifference of the Government to the well-being of the people.

The imports include cotton manufactures Rs. 65 crores, artificial silk Rs. 4 crores, sugar Rs. 18 crores, metals and their manufactures Rs. 23 crores, motor vehicles Rs. 5 crores, liquors Rs. 3 crores, cigarettes nearly Rs. 2 crores. These imports too tell the same

tale of our impotence where it is not worse. The imports of a country in a healthy state of progress should be such as the country may need for its growth. The imports I have mentioned are not needed for our growth. Liquor and cigarettes promote our degradation. Cotton manufactures, the largest item among imports, discover our shame and wretchedness. They remind us of what the villages must have been when they were manufacturing all that cloth in their own homes with their own hands. What is there in the place of hand-spinning to supply the villagers with work during their idle hours? What can replace the drain of the millions they spend on flimsy foreign calico? Such a people must necessarily grow, as they are growing, poorer and duller.

Young India, 28-3-1929

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ADVICE TO YOUNG BURMA

[The following is the full text of Gandhiji's speech at Rangoon in reply to the address of welcome on behalf of the General Council of the All-Burmese Association.]

It has given me special joy that on the very first arrival in Burma I find myself in close touch with Burmese friends, men and women, and Burmese thoughts and aspirations.

I thank you for the paper that you have just read to me for my edification. But you will not expect me to express any opinion upon many points that you have raised in your paper. It would be pure presumption on my part if I attempted to give my own opinion upon what we have just heard from you. But let me just own to you that it is true that Indians living in your midst have not interested themselves in your political aspirations and in your troubles and sorrows. I should be very sorry to make that discovery. I do not need to study the real situation in order to express what is after all a truism that those who live and make their livelihood and move in your midst should identify themselves with your aspirations and be partners in your joys and sorrows.

You inform me that you are holding a big conference on the 22nd or the 23rd instant and that at that conference you propose to pass a resolution for boycott of British goods. I must in all humility warn you against taking any such step. If you will look around yourselves, you will find as practical men and women that, if for nothing else, that resolution is useless for this reason that it cannot be reduced to

practice by any single one of you. I claim to be an expert in this matter, and so I would advise you strongly to do what is your duty — to proclaim a boycott not of British goods, but of all foreign cloth which necessarily includes British cloth.

This limitation is based on practical wisdom which I claim for myself, and secondly on the creed of non-violence which also I claim to have studied with great reverence and equally great patience and perseverance. The man who is saturated with the spirit of non-violence has never any quarrel with a single individual. His opposition is directed to a system, to the evil that is in man, but not against the man himself.

Your quarrel, therefore, is not with the British people, but with the imperialistic spirit of exploitation of the weak races of the earth. If you will work along these lines — I must not attempt to work out the whole of this proposition, but I must suggest the deduction from premises, if you will work it out — the deduction is that this non-violent reasoning puts an automatic restraint on your boycott activity. And the limit is foreign cloth.

Now the mere boycott of foreign cloth does not take you a yard further in your progress towards the amelioration of the peasantry of Burma. I tendered at this evening's meeting, in reply to the Corporation address, my congratulations to the Burmese friends upon their generosity and open-mindedness. But I am sorry that I cannot tender the same congratulations to you upon the industry of the men of Burma. You are satisfied if you scratch the earth a little bit and grow an abundant crop of rice. We also do likewise in several parts of India. But that does not take you through the whole year, and no peasantry in the world has yet been found to keep its head above water by working only for a limited period of the year. Well, then, if you import foreign cloth, you deny yourselves

the privilege and duty of working with your hands and preparing your own cloth. This is like cutting off both your hands.

You have talked, I am afraid, light-heartedly of the spinning wheel and khadi. Believe me you will fail to introduce the spinning wheel or rather to re-introduce the spinning wheel, if you will not appreciate this fundamental distinction between the boycott of foreign cloth on the one hand and that of British cloth alone on the other.

I will, therefore, ask wiser heads among you to study a little more deeply the immense bearing of the spinning wheel upon your life as upon that of the starving millions of India.

Young India, 4-4-1929

FOREIGN CLOTH BOYCOTT

Shri Jairamdas, Secretary of the Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee appointed by the Working Committee, has not allowed grass to grow under his feet. The headquarters of the Committee are Congress House, Bombay. From there the Secretary is issuing bulletins and leaflets and addressing letters to municipal bodies and others. An important leaflet gives the names and addresses of sale and production khadi depots throughout India. It will interest the reader to know that there are in all 328 such centres, of which Bengal has 66 and Tamilnad 64. Next come Andhra with 39 and Bihar with 33. Whilst by itself the list is encouraging, it is but a drop in the ocean compared with the foreign cloth shops in the country. There is no doubt that Bombay alone has more than 328 foreign cloth sale depots. It is for the public to capture this trade which drains away crores of rupees annually from India. One rupee spent on khadi giveth life, one rupee spent on foreign cloth killeth.

The bulletins issued by the office give information about the progress of boycott. The first leaflet issued gives the case for boycott. I copy the following interesting paragraphs from the leaflet :

We Consume 13 Yards per Head :

> " It has been calculated, on the basis of figures of cloth produced in and imported into India during the last 29 years from 1899 to 1928, that the annual consumption of cloth in India is 12.86 yards. If we take the figures of the last ten years only, the average consumption has been 13.08, i. e. about 13, yards per head. On the other hand India has been able to pull on with less than even 9 yards per

head, as in 1919–20 when the consumption was only 8.8 yards per head.

The Problem of Boycott :

Taking 13 yards as the normal consumption of cloth per head, let us see what the problem of the complete boycott of foreign cloth consists in. How much of these 13 yards comes from outside India? During the last ten years India has been importing on an average about 33 p. c. of the total yardage of cloth consumed by it, i. e. $4\frac{1}{3}$ yards per head. The remaining $8\frac{2}{3}$ yards per head are produced in the country by mills and hand-looms.

The problem of effecting a complete boycott of foreign cloth thus reduces itself to producing in India only $4\frac{1}{2}$ yards of cloth more per head per year.

How to Solve It :

At the above rate, the total extra cloth required for the nation will be $4\frac{1}{3} \times 31.89$ lakhs, i. e. about 138 crores of yards. Experts have calculated that an ordinary spinner can spin in 8 hours sufficient yarn of 10 counts (at an average of 350 yards per hour) to produce 1 yard of cloth. If he works for 8 hours a day for 300 days in a year, he can produce 300 yards of cloth. We thus require only 46 lakhs of such spinners to produce all the yarn needed for 138 crores of yards of cloth. Out of 50 lakhs of charkhas in India, 40 lakhs are today idle. They have to be put in motion by finding the spinners. Is this an impossible task for a nation of nearly 32 crores?

All that it means is that, if only 3 out of every 200 persons in India do such spinning, the task is done! All that we lack is the will to attempt it.

It has been estimated that the number of rural workers in India who are practically unemployed for three months in a year will come to as much as 11 crores. If 184 lakhs of such unemployed rural workers (i. e. only 1 out of every 6 unemployed

men) are engaged on spinning, we shall have, within the period of their enforced leisure, all the yarn we need for a complete boycott of foreign cloth. Spinning will yield them an income, on the lowest computation, of one anna per day. For the millions whose income otherwise averages to less than 1 anna 7 pies, this addition is a boon."

The leaflet thus concludes:

Do Your Duty:

"The problem being thus reduced to simple and intelligible terms, you can contribute to the movement in all or any one of the following ways:

1. By using genuine khadi in the place of foreign cloth.

2. By making a pecuniary contribution to the movement.

3. By doing sacrificial spinning regularly every day at least for half an hour.

Act at once, now, today."

Young India, 18-4-1929

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SHAKE OFF THIS TORPOR*

Burning Foreign Cloth and Ahimsa

I thank you for the several purses as also the addresses that you have presented to me. Time is too short for me to attempt a detailed reply to all these various addresses. I propose, however, to single out two addresses, one from the Bandar District Board and the other from the Bandar Municipality, for reply, for they offer criticism. I value the addresses for it. I can profit by criticism, never by praise. In these addresses an objection has been raised against the burning of foreign cloth. It is not an original or a new argument. Some of my best friends have raised the very objections that have been raised in those addresses. But after having given the most careful consideration that I could to these objections I find myself unable to alter the views that I have always held on this question, viz. that it is the sacred duty of our people to strip themselves of their foreign clothes and consign them to the flames. And I venture to submit not only that it is consistent with the doctrine of ahimsa to burn foreign cloth, but that a proper appreciation of that doctrine demands the burning of foreign cloth in India. Remember one vital thing about this burning that it is the owner of the foreign cloth who is called upon to deliver for burning such cloth in his possession. You will concede that, if I possess a piece of cloth or anything that is infected with plague germs, it would be my duty to burn it. I remember how whilst I was in South Africa a market that had cost £ 14,000 was

* From the report of a speech delivered at Masulipatam on 13–4–1929.

consigned to the flames with all its contents by the Municipality of Johannesburg because it was suspected of being infected with plague germs. I admired and appreciated this action of the Johannesburg Municipality, and I still think that it probably saved Johannesburg from what might have been a deadly plague. As a Vaishnavite I can repeat to you experiences from my own life and my friends' lives of the richest dishes being thrown into the gutter because they had suffered ceremonial pollution. My submission in connection with the foreign cloth is that it is more than polluted and is infected with germs that are fatal to the welfare of India — moral, economic and political. You of Masulipatam do not need to be reminded of the history of this port and how foreign cloth has denuded this port of India of its commercial prosperity and its once matchless art. I hold that we committed a crime against Indian humanity when we parted with the spinning wheel and sold the economic independence of India for a pottage of foreign cloth. And today, acted upon by inertia, we are repeating that crime. I have therefore felt it to be my bounden duty to awaken India from her torpor. You do not need to have a knowledge of economics to understand the simple truth that, if we could distribute among the starving millions of India 60 crores of rupees that go to the purchase of foreign cloth, none of them need starve, nor do you need to have an extraordinary knowledge of arithmetic in order to appreciate the fact that, if we could produce all the cloth that is needed in India, it is possible to prevent these 60 crores from going out of the country. This is a thing that we were doing only 100 years ago. We have got ready-made power in the arms and hands of millions of able-bodied men and women that are today rusting in idleness in the cottages of India. There is no reason why these millions of idle hands should not be turning millions of spindles in the

cottages of the 700,000 villages of India. England does not grow cotton, and yet she finds it possible for her to carry cotton grown in India all the way over to Lancashire and to return it to India in the form of cloth. How much more easy should it be then for us to carry cotton that we ourselves grow from place to place in India where it may be needed, and get it woven into cloth? In spite of apathy and in spite of passive and even active opposition, the thing is being done today in two thousand villages in this country. And our needy sisters do not mind walking several miles from day to day or week to week to get money or cotton in exchange for the yarn that their delicate fingers have spun. If, therefore, we have the slightest feeling for these needy sisters and for the starving millions of India, one-tenth of whom, according to English administrators themselves, hardly get a sqare meal from year's end to year's end, you will discard and consign to the flames every inch of foreign cloth as the least penance, the least expiation that India expects her sons to do.

A Counsel of Perfection

But it has been suggested in one of these addresses that khadi should not be sold through middlemen but manufactured by each one for himself. I like this counsel of perfection. Only it betrays ignorance of practical facts about khadi production. And if the framers of these addresses will permit me to say so, it betrays gross ignorance of the technique of khadi production. It is a physical impossibility for everybody to produce his own khadi, just as it is physically impossible for every man to grow his own rice. It is not possible for dwellers in the cities of India to produce their own khadi even if they wished to do so. At no time in the history of India of which we have record was it possible for everyone to produce his or her khadi. And for the life of me I cannot under-

stand the philosophy lying behind the statement : 'Wear either your own khadi or foreign cloth.' Let it be known that there are millions in India who can work at the spinning wheel for eight hours a day, and that it is impossible for them to use all the khadi woven therefrom. It is the bounden duty of good citizens of India to take off the surplus product that is turned out by these brothers and sisters of theirs. Let us not also forget that it is man's social nature which distinguishes him from the brute creation. If it is his privilege to be independent, it is eqally his duty to be interdependent. Only an arrogant man will claim to be independent of everybody else and be self-contained. But let me in all humility point out to the framers of these addresses that the movement of 'self-contained' system of khadi production is going on in several places in India, and if only the Municipalities, the Taluk Boards and the District Boards will do their primary duty and come to assistance, it will be possible to reconstruct our villages so that the villages collectively, not the villagers individually, will become self-contained so far as their clothing requirements are concerned, and if the framers of these addresses will take the trouble of reading the literature produced by the A. I. S. A. from time to time, they will find what is being done in this direction. It is for that reason that I have said times without number that when khadi becomes current coin in India, it will have nothing to fear from the competition of foreign cloth or even of Indian mill-made cloth. A little reflection will show that this is a self-demonstrable proposition.

Young India, 25-4-1929

PROGRESS OF F. C. B.

The F. C. B. Committee presented the A. I. C. C. at its meeting last week with a report of its work. The report covers only two months ending 30th April. Satisfactory as the progress may be considered, it would have been far more so, if we had a responsive Congress organization working full speed. Municipalities and local bodies are slowly moving in reply to Shri Jairamdas's appeal. Not more than thirty have as yet sent in their replies. Every local body that has been captured by the Congress should surely carry out the boycott resolution. Meagre as the response from organized public bodies has been, the movement has already made itself felt. From the many extracts quoted in the report I take the following from a speech of Mr. J. C. Roberts, President of the Delhi Piecegoods Association:

> "Another disturbing factor which was causing no little anxiety to the commercial community was the present unstable political situation in the country and its *offshoot in the shape of the threatened movement for the boycott of foreign cloth.* Manufacturing centres were also not free from the effect of the present depression in India, and by reports from home it was seen that about one-third of the total textile mills in Great Britain had to be closed down on account of absence of demand from India and the failure of the Indian buyer to take forward contracts....... Matters were going from bad to worse, and the future looked rather gloomy and uncertain."

The propaganda has produced a marked effect on the sales of khadi which show a rise upon last year for the same period of 50 per cent.

But says Tattersall regarding Calcutta:

> "There have been indications of more demand in piecegoods.......With regard to India there are more signs of Calcutta being in need of bigger supplies especially in dhotis, and rather freer buying has taken place."

Upon this the report says:

> "Calcutta imported last year 2,821 lakhs of rupees worth of foreign cloth out of a total of Rs. 6,516 lakhs for the whole country. Its share came to 43 per cent. It is thus the chief port of entry of foreign cloth. This fact only increases the significance of the above comment."

Let Calcutta Congressmen take note of the warning.

Many people seem to fear that presently there will be no khadi on the market, and that then we shall be as before at the mercy of the indigenous mills with the danger of being once more bamboozled and fooled into taking foreign cloth in the guise of Indian mill-made cloth or at least paying exorbitant prices. The danger is real if we will not devote our time to producing khadi in all the ways open to us. The ways are:

1. Spinning for self,
2. Spinning for hire, and
3. Spinning for sacrifice.

The first is the most important, universal, and never-failing once it is organized. Time for effective propaganda in this direction has only just been reached. Shri Satish Chandra Dasgupta of Khadi Pratisthan has realized this and is organizing it on a large scale. It is the cheapest method of khadi production, for it does away with the bother of having to find a market for the production. The second is spinning for hire for which there is great scope. But this needs capital for stocking cotton and organizing sales. But of course it also taxes our business capacity, makes us resourceful, and enables us to build up a vast organization and

find honourable employment for the middle class people. The third method is noble but can be taken up only by a select class. If the nation realized the necessity of sacrifice, it could be a means of producing an unlimited quantity of yarn. All the schools conducted by municipalities can give us yarn to clothe lakhs of people. City-dwellers giving half an hour per day to the wheel can give at least 100 yards of good yarn. Let no one thoughtlessly retort that they can better employ their half hour than by merely spinning yarn. A banker finding himself stranded in a waterless desert cannot better employ his hours than by collecting fresh water. An India bent upon achieving boycott of foreign cloth during this year cannot better employ the time of even the best of her inhabitants than in spinning yarn till that boycott is achieved. We do not see this simple obvious truth because we do not feel the necessity of this boycott. At any rate all the three methods are being tried, and there is no danger of khadi famine if all of us would work at them to the best of our ability.

Young India, 30-5-1929

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KHADI AND SWADESHI*

We often think that we have carried out the full message of Swadeshi when we have adopted khadi. We treat it as a passport for the use of everything else from non-Indian sources and for the introduction of the latest fashions from Paris. This is a travesty of Swadeshi and a denial of the message of khadi. Whilst khadi is an obligation for all time in India, surely it is equally an obligation to use India-made things wherever we can get them even though they may be inferior to foreign articles. There are several Swadeshi things on the market which are in danger of disappearance for want of patronage. They may not be up to the mark. It is for us to use them and require the makers to improve them wherever improvement is possible. The rule of the best and the cheapest is not always true. Just as we do not give up our country for one with a better climate but endeavour to improve our own, so also may we not discard Swadeshi for better or cheaper foreign things. Even as a husband who being dissatisfied with his simple-looking wife goes in search of a better-looking woman is disloyal to his partner, so is a man disloyal to his country who prefers foreign-made things though better to country-made things. The law of each country's progress demands on the part of its inhabitants preference for their own products and manufactures.

Young India, 30-5-1929

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* From an article entitled "In Andhradesh".

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KHADI AND BOYCOTT

Our disbelief is an extraordinary phenomenon. We have no faith in our ability to do anything. If it is total prohibition, it is regarded as impossible. Hindu Muslim unity is a daydream. Removal of untouchability in the face of Sanatanist opposition is unthinkable. Boycott of foreign cloth through mills we did not achieve, through khadi we cannot achieve. There thus remains nothing that we can possibly do. Hence Swaraj is an impossible proposition and slavery our natural condition. This is a most debasing state for anyone to be in.

Our disbelief is the greatest stumbling block in our march towards Swaraj. Let us just examine the proposition that boycott cannot be achieved through khadi. It is said that khadi production is not enough for our wants. Those who talk or write thus do not know the A B C of khadi. Khadi is capable of infinite expansion because it can be as easily made as bread if we have the will. I need not go into the economics of khadi for the purposes of boycott. Supposing England and Japan ceased to send us their cloth and our mills somehow or other could not work, we would not think of the economics of khadi, but we would simply manufacture the required quantity in our own homes. The merchants who had lost their piecegoods trade would all be occupied in khadi production. It is only because we have created a vicious atmosphere of impotence round ourselves that we consider ourselves to be helpless even for the simplest possible things. But for our hopelessness, there is no reason why we should not feel that what Bijolia has been able to do without the stress and

incentive of boycott, we should certainly do under the great and patriotic incentive. It is being done today in Bardoli on such a scale that the technical department is unable fully to cope with the demand for wheels and accessories.

Undoubtedly the movement will fall flat if everybody becomes a critic and bystander and nobody says, 'It is my business.' This movement depends for its success upon the willing and organized co-operation of millions. This co-operation can be had for the asking if the thinking class will put their hands to the wheel with the fixed determination to succeed. Let them remember that this is a movement which has a growing and vigilant organization with a modest capital. It has only to be worked by the nation to its fullest capacity, and success is a certainty.

Let it be remembered that there is no other constructive scheme before the nation for effective action on a universal scale. I have repeatedly pointed out in these pages how production of khadi can be indefinitely increased. I have described the three methods, viz. spinning for hire, spinning for self, and spinning for sacrifice. Once the spirit of true sacrifice seizes the nation, it is possible to inundate the market with hand-spun yarn. And I have shown that the secret of khadi production lies in increased production of yarn. There are over ninetyseven lakhs of pupils studying in all the schools of India. It makes a miserable percentage of less than 4 per cent of the total population, but the number is enough for easy organization of sacrificial spinning. This figure takes no account of several other institutions that can be also similarly organized without much effort, if the determination is reached that we must achieve boycott through khadi.

Young India, 20-6-1929

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MILL-OWNERS AND BOYCOTT

Although I have before now dealt with this question in these pages, correspondents often inquire why the indigenous mills are not invited to take part in the foreign cloth boycott movement. Others inquire what part these mills play in the movement. Yet others ask why Congress workers should not directly encourage and advertise indigenous mill cloth side by side with khadi.

To take the last question first, these correspondents should remember that the Congress resolution contemplates the boycott through khadi. There are sound reasons for this partiality. Mill cloth alone has had its opportunity for the past fifty years, and it has not brought boycott about. Immediate boycott through the existing mills is an impossibility. New mills cannot be started for the asking. Therefore, if the boycott is to succeed, it can do so only through khadi. Khadi cannot be pushed side by side with mill cloth. Given the choice, it must be confessed with regret that the unthinking multitude will prefer the apparently cheaper and easily obtainable calico to the apparently dearer and coarse-looking and not easily obtainable khadi. It follows, therefore, that Congress workers, as far as their influence can reach — and it does not reach very far yet — must preach khadi to the exclusion of mill cloth.

This brings me to the second question. The exclusive preaching of khadi does not mean hostility to the indigenous mill cloth. Mill cloth is playing an important part in the movement whether the mill-owners will or no. The multitude buys it in competition with foreign cloth. The mills have their agencies, direct and indirect, in all the parts of India. As a

distinguished mill-owner once very properly remarked to me, "We do not want your help. We penetrate where you will perhaps never even make your voice heard. If you preach our cloth, you simply invite us to raise our prices by creating a demand we cannot cope with." He was silenced when I told him that I contemplated boycott not through mill cloth but through khadi. He at once agreed that it was quite a feasible proposition if I could produce enough khadi to displace foreign cloth and popularize it. Most mill-owners recognize this as did the one I have quoted. Any advocacy, then, on the part of Congressmen of mill cloth can only hinder boycott and ultimately even damage the mills by reason of the certain failure of the movement through the adoption of thoughtless methods. The reader should realize that repeated failures of the movement must result in deepening despondency and then making the people indifferent in their purchase of cloth. We must avoid failure this time at any cost. We may risk no avoidable mistake through sluggish or imperfect thinking. It is the popular indifference that has given the foreign cloth dealer his vantage ground. The moment the people are induced to think for themselves and make their choice, the boycott is a certainty. The indigenous mills are, therefore, playing their part in the movement and profiting by it without assistance from Congressmen.

Now for the first question. There is undoubtedly a way in which the mill-owner can actively, deliberately and effectively help the movement. An attempt was made last by Pandit Malaviyaji and Motilalji and myself to invite their active participation. The attempt failed, perhaps because it was not in the nature of things possible for the mills actively to participate in terms of the Congress in any movement with which the Government do not openly associate themselves or which they are suspected of secretly disapproving. The vast majority of them are under the influence of

banking concerns which depend for their existence on Government goodwill. But if there are mills which can defy Government pressure, no matter how subtly exerted, here are the conditions under which they or any of them can directly participate in the movement wholly or partially:

1. They can sell khadi through their agencies;
2. They can lend their talents to the movement;
3. They can, by conference with the A. I. S. A., determine the varieties they should manufacture in terms of boycott;
4. They can cease to manufacture khadi whether in that name or any other;
5. They can standardize their prices so as neither to suffer loss nor to increase their profits; and
6. They can render financial assistance to the movement.

Several other ways may easily be deduced from the six chief ones I have mentioned. This assistance can be given only if the mill-owners and the shareholders are patriotically inclined and are prepared to limit their profits. I am sure the majority of shareholders, if they were properly canvassed, would not object. It is the capitalist who has, therefore, really to decide. As one of them told me, 'We will come in when we must — not before.' He may be right.

Lastly the reader should know that all mills because they are built on the Indian soil may not be called indigenous. There are mills that are indigenous only in name. They are owned and managed by foreigners, their shareholders are foreigners, they exclude Indians from management or shares, the major part of their earnings are drained away from India. The only thing that India gets out of their earnings is the paltry labourers' wages. These mills are no more indigenous than the existing Government. These can never help the movement.

Young India, 4-7-1929

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URBAN v. RURAL

Several correspondents have sent me cuttings from *Prabuddha Bharat* containing an elaborate criticism of Mr. Gregg's book and thereanent the whole cult of the charkha. The articles are too long for reproduction in these pages. I must refer the curious to the original. But they enunciate the following propositions:

> "1. India must become industrial in the Western sense.
>
> 2. The question of physical existence cannot be solved by the charkha.
>
> 3. The conditions attached to the success of the charkha make too large claims on prevailing tendencies and human nature.
>
> 4. The justification and superiority of machines lie not so much in meeting the internal needs of a country as in invading and capturing foreign markets.
>
> 5. If India is to live and fulfil her spiritual mission among men, she must modernize herself.......Let us unhesitatingly and energetically assimilate the modern industrial methods.......But along with that we must practise spirituality intensely, create a mighty spiritual idealism in the mind of the nation, and a great love for the country, so that on the wings of them we may cross over the dark valley of modernism in which the West is sadly groping. Without spiritual idealism, *modernism will spell a speedy ruin.*"

I have so far as possible copied the writer's words including his italics.

I am sorry that I am unable to subscribe to these propositions. They are obviously based upon the assumption that modern civilization is comparatively a good thing, and that it cannot be resisted with any

hope of success. There is a growing body of enlightened opinion in the West which distrusts this civilization which has insatiable material ambition at one end and consequent war at the other.

But whether good or bad, why must India become industrial in the Western sense? The Western civilization is urban. Small countries like England or Italy may afford to urbanize their systems. A big country like America with a very sparse population, perhaps, cannot do otherwise. But one would think that a big country, with a teeming population with an ancient rural tradition which has hitherto answered its purpose, need not, must not, copy the Western model. What is good for one nation situated in one condition is not necessarily good enough for another differently situated. One man's food is often another man's poison. Physical geography of a country has a predominant share in determining its culture. A fur coat may be a necessity for the dweller in the polar regions; it will smother those living in the equatorial regions.

The author's second proposition that 'the question of physical existence cannot be solved by the charkha' cannot hold water. On the contrary that question can only be answered by the charkha or its equivalent. Every writer of note, whether Indian or European, has admitted the necessity of cottage industries, if India is to live physically. The writer of the articles in question has done less than justice to himself, to Mr. Gregg, and to his own country by summarily dismissing Mr. Gregg's dispassionate thesis. Mr. Gregg has considerable engineering experience, and he has shown conclusively that it will be suicidal, it must mean certain death, to millions of India's population, if the solar power stored in the hands and feet of her three hundred million inhabitants is allowed to run to waste in the impossible attempt to replace it with steam or such other power for the purpose of sustaining physical existence. It would be on a par with

the attempt made by a man not to use his hand for bringing food to the lips but to let a machine do the work of the hand and run the risk in the bargain of sometimes burning his lips for want of the automatic protection that the sensory nerves connecting the hand with the brain afford against overhot dishes.

The third proposition is now simply answered. 'The conditions attached to the charkha' not only make no 'large claims on the prevailing tendencies and human nature', but they are based on 'the prevailing tendencies and human nature' as they are to be found in India. Were it otherwise, in the midst of confusion and disappointment running through so many national activities the charkha would not have spread through 2,000 villages, nor would it have shown the steady, though necessarily slow, progress it has demonstrably made during the past eight years' revival.

In the fourth proposition the writer justifies the worship of the machine age not for the reason that it may meet the 'internal needs of a country', but because it means an 'invasion and capturing of foreign markets'. Unfortunately or fortunately for India there are no foreign markets to invade and capture. The consummate exploiters of the West have 'done the trick'. We may invade and capture foreign markets, if we will at the same time invade and capture the foreign manufacturing countries. And if the writer has any such grand scheme in contemplation, methinks it is more difficult of accomplishment than the task set before themselves by the votaries of the charkha.

The last proposition gives away the writer's whole case. He will modernize India and yet retain her spirituality without which he thinks, in italics, that 'modernism will spell ruin'. He will have India to do what experienced sages have told us is impossible of accomplishment. 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.'

He seems to agree that the West has failed to reconcile the two. Why does he think that India can perform the impossible task? Why should it not be assumed that, if the ancients could have done it, they would have done so long ago? Indeed it was after making the attempt that the authors of the Upanishads said, 'All this is God's. Therefore live so as not to covet your neighbour's property.' Surely exploitation means usurpation. And usurpation can never be reconciled with spiritualism. It pained me, therefore, to read the article with such a dismal conclusion in a magazine which is solely devoted to spiritual culture.

What was more painful still was the exploitation of the name of Swami Vivekanand in connection with the double-edged theory propounded by the writer. The inferential invocation of the authority of the illustrious dead in a reasoned discussion should be regarded as a sacrilege. After all we, a handful of educated Indians, are shouldering a serious responsibility in gambling with the fortunes of the dumb millions whose trustees we claim to be. A still more serious responsibility rests upon the shoulders of those of us who claim to possess some spiritual perception.

Young India, 25-7-1929

CHARKHA AS FAMINE RELIEF

Prafulla Babu of Abhay Ashram (Bengal) writes about relief work undertaken by it in connection with the recent terrible floods :

"You may remember of Sheth Ramanlalji's donation for the introduction of the charkha in the flood-affected area in Tippera. Since then we have received Rs. 1,000 through Shri Harivallabh C. Shah from the Servants of India Society Relief Fund, and some more from other sources specially earmarked for charkha work. In the beginning of the relief work we confined ourselves to the work of removing people to the highlands with their belongings and to the giving of doles of rice. Then we tried to give them work by purchasing for them permits to work in the hills and giving them paddy for husking and by the introduction of spinning. Due to the rains paddy-husking could not make any appreciable headway, but spinning was most readily accepted at Mainamati, one of the relief centres at a distance of 6 miles from Comilla. The work was started towards the end of July, about 6 weeks after the breach in the embankment, and the results have been quite satisfactory. The production of yarn by the end of the month of July was only 57 lbs., but in August it rose to 375 lbs. and 227 spinners earned Rs. 193-11-9; and in September it came up to 1,034 lbs. and 414 spinners earned Rs. 588-6-0. The number of spinners is rapidly increasing. We are going to invest Rs. 10,000 out of the relief fund for the charkha work, and we are sure they will soon be earning about Rs. 1,000 every month by spinning alone. It is really a great thing, if by this capital

outlay the villagers can earn Rs. 1,000 every month as a supplementary income in the absence of any other occupation more paying.

In addition to this we are selling rice at cost price. This has not only helped the people by the few annas by which we are selling the rice cheaper, but it has also been a control on the high price which the local merchants would dictate in the absence of our depots.

You will be glad to learn that the prospect of the second crop in the comparatively high lands, where they have been able to sow, is very bright, and they will be able almost to make up for the loss they sustained. But in the low-lying lands the condition is most miserable. They cannot expect to have any crop before July next."

In the face of facts like these percolating through many sources east and west, north and south under varying conditions, no one can deny the value of the spinning wheel as a very substantial aid in famine times.

Young India, 31-10-1929

IMPLICATIONS OF THE WHEEL

A friend sends the following cutting headed 'A Century behind the Times' from *The Textile World*:

> " The Gandhi movement in India being a protest against mechanization of industry, and designed in part to provide maximum work for a maximum number of people in their homes, it seems strange that this Society should be offering a prize of approximately $ 37,500 for a hand machine that will gin, card and spin cotton from the coarsest numbers to as fine as 20 s with a maximum production of 16,000 yards in an eight hour day.
>
> Perhaps nothing more aptly illustrates the economic error and futility of the Gandhi movement, and of all effort to check industrial progress, than the fact that a machine meeting practically all of the requirements of the contest, with the possible exception of producing the finest counts in quantity, was in use in this country more than a century ago. One of the original machines was on exhibition at the last textile machinery show in Greenville, S. C., and we believe that both the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, and Henry Ford at Dearborn, Mich., have types of these ancient machines that would qualify for Gandhi's prize.
>
> Maximum opportunity for mental, moral, social and religious progress is not to be attained for a maximum number of people by Gandhi's methods, but by their antithesis — by constant effort toward automatic machine production, employing a minimum number of operatives, a minimum number of hours at maximum pay, thus liberating larger numbers of workers for other industrial effort, encouraging

development of new industries, and giving both workers and their dependent women, children and old folks greater opportunities for all other activities that make life worth living.

The offering of this prize is open admission of the basic economic error of the Gandhi movement and of all effort to check maximum automatic mechanization of industry. For the industrial and social future of India it is a hopeful sign."

This is an instance of argument suiting preconceived ideas. The author of the note has evidently not taken the trouble of understanding the implications of what he calls the 'Gandhi movement', meaning of course the hand-spinning movement. The spinning movement aims at restoring spinning to the millions of cottages of India from which it was removed by unjust, illegal and tyrannical methods. The movement could not have been started, if somehow or other the cottages which were deprived of this universal supplementary industry had had a substitute provided for it. Unfortunately or fortunately no substitute was provided. Hence sheer necessity compelled the students of village life, after having exhausted all other means, to resort to the spinning wheel as the only immediate solution for the serious economic distress that had overtaken the millions of India's homes by reason of the extinction of cottage spinning. The moment these millions can have a better substitute, they are at liberty to give up the spinning wheel, and no one would be more glad than I to see these millions possess a better substitute. No doubt the authors of the movement do think that, so far as human understanding can go, there seems to be no hope of finding a better substitute than the spinning wheel. Indeed their conviction is that, as soon as the existing exploitation of the so-called weaker nations of the earth by the strong nations of the West ceases, as it is bound some day to cease, the whole world will have to return to the

spinning wheel. Whether, however, that event comes to pass or not, unless India becomes an exploiting nation and discovers new nations to exploit, or unless an independent India develops brute strength enough to compel the nations of the West to buy the goods that she may dump down on their soil, as India is virtually compelled today to receive goods dumped down on her soil, India must, if she is to rid herself of her economic distress, manufacture the articles of necessity in her own cottages, just as she produces her corn, the prime necessity of life, in her own fields. There is, therefore, no contradiction in the authors of the spinning movement trying to secure a wheel or a machine which would enable the cottagers in their own cottages to spin more or finer yarn in the same given time as the existing spinning wheel does. The writer of the note should know that this progressive method of improving home machines has been handed down from ancient times. The takli or the distaff was displaced by the spinning wheel. The spinning wheel itself underwent gradual improvement, as one sees even today from the different old patterns working in different provinces. The process of improvement was suddenly arrested when the spinning wheel went out of fashion. The Council of the All India Spinners' Association is, therefore, but following the course that was suddenly stopped by the machinations of the East India Company's agents. The fact is that neither the Council nor I have any objection to machines as such, but we do submit that it is wrong to carry the process of mechanization of industry so far as to kill the cottage industries and concentrate them within a narrow field; in other words, they are against urbanization of India at the expense of her civilization and rural life. The writer in *The Textile World* states that "a machine meeting practically all the requirements of the contest was in use in America more than a century ago." The adverb 'practically' is a disturbing

factor; but if there is such a machine in America in existence and if any American inventor will take the trouble of so adjusting it as to meet all the requirements of the contest, he will not only receive the prize offered by the Association, but he will earn also the thanks of the dumb millions. But let the critics understand that, even if such a machine is not invented and the prize is not won, the spinning movement will still continue its onward march. The Association feels thankful for its ability to serve 150,000 women in nearly 2,000 villages of India and through them serve also a number of weavers, washermen, tailors, printers and the like. The Association hopes, too, to cover every one of the seven hundred thousand villages and bring a ray of hope to their cottages where today blank despair reigns supreme.

Young India, 21-11-1929

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MILITARY PROGRAMME

George Joseph has been one of my dearest comrades. When I was having rest in Yeravda, he was editor of *Young India*. Before that at my instance he was editor of the now defunct *Independent*. He had sacrificed a lucrative practice for the sake of the country. He went to gaol for the same cause. He is an earnest and honest worker. He is therefore entitled to a respectful hearing, the more so when such a man differs from you and rejecting the old recommends with the fervour of a convert the adoption of a new policy. George Joseph has done it. One of his old associates sends a cutting from a newspaper containing Joseph's enunciation of his new policy, and marks it "George Joseph's confession of faith". Another man, an unknown admirer of George Joseph, copies out from the report the whole of his criticism of the khadi programme. He writes in a most distracted mood, and insists that I must take notice of the remarks about khadi.

There is no cause for distraction, grief or alarm. It would be surprising, if, in a great national upheaval, we did not find men honestly recanting old views and enunciating new. Change is a condition of progress. An honest man cannot afford to observe mechanical consistency when the mind revolts against anything as an error. We must therefore patiently try to understand what George Joseph has to say, and not hesitate to accept what appeals to our reason even though it may mean a sacrifice of some cherished ideal.

It is, I hope, in that spirit that I have endeavoured to study Joseph's speech. He condemns khadi, he is "quite satisfied that the removal of untouchability is

not primarily a problem of statesmanship.' His programme in one simple sentence is: 'Militarize India'. Here is an extract from the speech:

> "We cannot all become soldiers. There is not enough room for us. But it should be possible for us to set about the idea of training about 5,000 men every year in this presidency in urban units. The men will go to drill two or three times a week, go out to camp three weeks in the year. Such training should be made available not only for the students who are at college but also for men of sufficient social and educational status, the educational standard being the membership of the School-Leaving class. If you see in every street such people going about in khaki, there will be a new element in our life. This kind of training would make people to stand straight, to think straight, and to speak straight. It will be a great enrichment of our life."

My experience teaches me differently. I have known men in khaki rolling in gutters instead of standing straight. I have seen a Dyer thinking crooked and speaking not straight but nonsense. I have known a commander-in-chief being unable to think at all, let alone thinking straight. Let those who are enamoured of military training have it by all means, but to suggest it 'as a new constructive programme' betrays impatience and hasty thinking. There is not much danger of 'the new programme' taking root in the Indian soil. Moreover it is against the new order of things that is coming into being even in the West which has grown weary of the war-god. The military spirit in the West bids fair to kill the very humanity in man and reduce him to the level of the beast. What is wanted and what India has, thank God, learnt in a measure undreamt of before is the spirit of unarmed resistance before which the bayonet runs to rust and gunpowder turns to dust. The vision that Joseph puts before us of an armed Government bending a minority to its

will by a clatter of arms is a negation of the democratic spirit and progress. If that is the promise of the new programme, we have the armed coercion even now, not indeed of a mere minority but of an overwhelming majority. What we want, I hope, is a Government not based on coercion even of a minority but on its conversion. If it is a change from white military rule to a brown one, we hardly need make any fuss. At any rate the masses then do not count. They will be subject to the same spoliation as now if not even worse. When George Joseph has lived down his impatience, I know him to be too honest not to retrace his steps and become the fine democrat that to my great joy I had discovered him to be on the Madras beach in 1919.

Let us then turn to what he has to say about khadi:

> "As long as I was within the fold of the Congress, the only thing the constructive programme represented was khaddar, removal of untouchability, and in later years prohibition. Now I must frankly tell you that I have come deliberately to the conclusion that not one of these goes to the root of the fundamental need of this nation. Khaddar does not. I think it will not survive the creator of the movement, Gandhiji. I have come to that conclusion because of the fundamental economic defect which is attached to khaddar. It costs far too much to produce and to buy, and is, consequently, unjust to the consumer. Khaddar which costs about a rupee a yard will not stand against the cloth produced by the machine industries costing as. 6. My experience of khaddar is that it results in injustice to the producer also. The women, the spinners, who are at the root of khaddar, working for 10 hours a day, have got to be content with a wage of as. 3. I suggest that an industry based on the payment of as. 3 as wages to the fundamental producer thereof cannot succeed, because it amounts

to sweating of labour. The sweating of labour consists essentially in paying to the labourer less than is sufficient for her physical maintenance. It is no answer to say that the country is stricken with famine, that there are millions of people without occupation, and to say that for these as. 3 is better than no income whatever. I refuse to accept that argument. That cannot be an argument which can appeal to any human employer of labour, or any statesman with a forward-looking view, in reference to the affairs of his country. It is no consolation to be told that I shall be right in offering as. 3 wages a day, when I know as a matter of economic necessity that the wages would not be sufficient to maintain the worker, much less her family. That is to my mind the hopeless, ineradicable and inexorable vice that attaches to khaddar. That is why today, in spite of 7 or 8 years of labour by Gandhiji, and in spite of lakhs of money poured like water into the organization of the industry, the production of khaddar is infinitely small compared to the magnitude of the problem that has got to be solved, that is to produce clothing for the whole of India, and to put an end to the importation of Rs. 60 crores worth of cloth every year."

Here George Joseph's impatience for reform has betrayed him into lapse of memory. For he brings no new argument in support of his summary rejection of khadi, but quotes as facts what he himself used to refute as fallacies. Arguments may be revised on further consideration, but facts may not be unless they are proved to have been false. Khadi as conceived for the use of millions does not cost more than foreign cloth for the simple reason that the millions must, if khadi is to be used by them, be their own manufacturers and consumers. These pages have shown that in Bardoli, Bijolia and several other places khadi is being so manufactured and consumed even as in

millions of homes people cook and eat their own food. It is possible to demonstrate, in terms of metal, that rice or bread cooked in a few factories would cost less than they cost today in the millions of homes. But nobody on that account would dare suggest that the millions should cease to cook and should send their raw rice and wheat to be cooked in centralized factories.

Again it is not true to say that women spinners work ten hours per day. Whatever spinning they do is done during their spare hours, and what they get is not a day's wage but in the majority of cases a substantial addition to their daily earnings from their daily avocation. The earning from spinning is waste turned into wealth and not the price of 'sweated labour' as Joseph puts it. And let me correct Joseph by saying that no spinner even working for 10 hours per day can earn 3 as. per day. Spinning has never been conceived as a full-day occupation. Lastly it is untrue to say that 'lakhs of money have been poured like water into the organization of the industry.' No organization on a nation-wide scale has been known to cost less in organizing than this has. What is true is that a paltry 25 lakhs have been invested as capital for organizing this great and daily growing cottage industry which brings water to thousands of parched lips. Joseph must think cheap of his countrymen when he prophesies that an organization which employs at least 1,500 willing workers in 1,500 villages, an organization which brings daily relief to nearly 150,000 women, an organization which commands the self-sacrificing labours of a Mithubai Petit, the Naoroji Sisters, of a Banker, a Jamnalal, a Rajagopalachari, an Abbas Tyebji, a Venkatappayya, a Pattabhi, a Gangadharrao, a Vallabhbhai, a Lakshmidas, a Rajendraprasad, a Jairamdas, a Mahadev, a Kripalani, a Satish Chandra Dasgupta, a Suresh Banerji, aye a Jawaharlal and a host of others, lawyers, doctors,

merchants and laymen too numerous to mention though known to fame, will die after the death of one man. It will be a tragic miracle if all these men and women find the morning after my death that khadi was a 'huge blunder'.

And the pity of it all is that Joseph does not suggest an alternative. Not even if every educated Indian was dressed in khaki and knew how to shoot straight, would the problem of the growing poverty and the forced partial unemployment of millions of the peasantry be solved without a special programme devised for the purpose. For better or worse khadi is that programme till a better is evolved.

Young India, 19-12-1929

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THE DUTY OF CAPITALISTS

Shri Ghanashyamdas Birla, presiding the other day at the Maharashtra Merchants' Conference (Sholapur), delivered a speech that was noteworthy for the freedom with which he expressed his opinions. He would have no distinction made between English cloth and other foreign cloth in the matter of protection. He said:

> "What I want to tell the Government is that while the country would not tolerate any duty based on principle of differentiation even in the interests of the cotton industry, it is vitally essential that an extra uniform *ad valorem* protective duty should be imposed. I maintain that the Bombay cotton industry requires protection not only against imports of cheaper goods but also against imports of finer goods."

Speaking on the duty of capitalists he presented an ideal which it will be difficult even for a labour man to improve upon. Pleading for unity among the merchant class he said:

> "But let me make it clear that the unity which I propose for the businessmen should be unity for service and not for exploitation. The modern capitalist has been much abused of late. In fact he is being looked upon at present as belonging to a separate class. But in the days of yore the situation was something quite different. If we analyse the functions of the Vaishya of the ancient times, we find that he was assigned the duty of production and distribution, not for personal gain but for common good. All the wealth that he amassed he held as a trustee for the nation. Capitalists, if they are to fulfil their real function, must exist not as exploiters, but as servants of society. No Communism or

Bolshevism can thrive if we know and discharge our duty. If I may say so, it is we who provided a fertile soil for the development of Communism and Bolshevism by relegating our duty to the background. If we knew our duty and followed it faithfully, I am sure that we could save society from many evils. I have mentioned that our true function is to produce and distribute......Let us produce and distribute for the service of the community. Let us live and be prepared, if it comes to that, to sacrifice oursevles for the common good."

Young India, 19-12-1929

A NEW ORIENTATION

Let me illustrate my point. There is the proposal for protecting the mill industry and at the same time of Imperial Preference. I call this a dangerous trap, especially when the expression of Dominion Status is being bandied about in connection with the proposed Round Table Conference. If against the grant of Dominion Status or even Independence a stipulation is made that there should always be preference for British cloth, Dominion Status or Independence will have no meaning either for the millions or for the indigenous mills. There can never be preference for things British when India is capable of manufacturing them to the full extent of the demand thereof within her own borders. She may share foreign trade with others; she dare not share her inland trade with anybody so long as she is able to cope with it herself. Indeed she is entitled, and it is her duty, to protect growing industries against even a friendly England or any other friendly power. It would be wrong and unpatriotic for the mill-owners to fall into the trap laid for them. They should stoutly refuse to have anything to do with Imperial Preference for British cloth, even if they gain a prohibitive tariff against all other foreign cloth.*

Young India, 12-3-1930

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*From an article entitled 'A New Orientation'.

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OUR MILLS AND FOREIGN CLOTH BOYCOTT

Foreign cloth boycott is coming, if we will do our duty and tax ourselves to understand its purpose and the conditions of success. I must not at present adduce reasons for the propositions set forth below. They have been often argued in these columns. I am having the figures prepared for reproduction. But for the present I give my conclusions for those who are interested in them. They are arrived at dispassionately and after due consideration of every factor and every argument for and against.

1. It is impossible for the indigenous mills to cope with the deficiency to be created by a complete boycott within the time we expect it to come to fruition.

2. All the mills situated in India are not Swadeshi; some of them are as foreign as the foreign Government inasmuch as they drain the wealth of the country away from it. They are close preserves for Europeans only employing Indian labour.

3. The majority of Swadeshi mills will not work for the national benefit only or even predominantly.

4. Even when they will, they can be crushed by the Government in a variety of ways.

5. The majority will not resist the temptation to exploit the present favourable times.

6. Many mills use foreign yarn for weaving, especially for borders.

7. We can only use them by not counting upon them to replace the cloth boycotted and by putting them upon their own resources and honour.

8. This last we can only do if we can replace the cloth boycotted through cloth not manufactured in our mills. This can only be khadi.

9. An unlimited quantity of khadi can be manufactured without the slightest difficulty inside of one month, if the spirit of khadi and the will to manufacture it can be created.

10. Skilled weavers are to be found all over India. The only problem, therefore, is that of spinning.

11. Spinning and the antecedent processes can be learnt inside of one week by those who have the will and the industry.

12. India produces more than enough cotton for all her requirements.

13. Therefore all those who work for boycott of foreign cloth should concentrate on khadi production through spinning. This does not mean boycott of Swadeshi mill cloth, but it means an intelligent recognition of the fact that the mills do not need any effort for selling their cloth. The boycott movement sufficiently helps them by removing foreign cloth which competes with them and stifles them as it had suppressed the spinning wheel. To do more for the mills than procure boycott of foreign cloth will be to harm khadi.

Mill-owners can, if they will, help boycott through khadi by publishing the list of those mills which are owned, controlled and managed by Indians, which use no foreign yarn at all in weaving, and which will not manufacture cloth corresponding to khadi, will not use the name of khadi or the wheel on their labels, and will not inflate prices.

I am convinced that those who merely carry on boycott propaganda without insisting on boycotters contributing towards khadi production by themselves spinning or procuring spinners and who talk loosely of Swadeshi retard the boycott movement if they do not actually harm it. Boycotters must not stray away from their path even though for the moment they are

unable to satisfy the demand for khadi. Let them know that that very moment is the one most propitious for khadi production. Necessity is the mother of invention. It knows no law, for it invents new laws. They need not worry if people refuse to give up foreign cloth if they are also called upon to spin. This restraint will truly push forward the boycott movement. It is no empty formula. Just as we want Swaraj not to punish Englishmen but because we cannot live without it, so also we need boycott of foreign cloth not to punish Englishmen but to bring work and therefore food through the wheel to the starving millions.

Young India, 24-4-1930

FOREIGN CLOTH DEALERS

I have given my opinion to the press representatives on the question of foreign cloth boycott. The nervousness of the dealers is a symptom of want of faith in the country. Why do they want terms and time if they are sure that Swaraj is coming in the near future? Why will they not come in unconditionally and make it a greater certainty? All this uncertainty, instead of strengthening the Swaraj atmosphere, weakens it and fills people's minds with doubts. This movement is largely based on faith. There is nothing organically wrong with us to make us unfit for Swaraj. It is our hallucination that makes us—a nation of three hundred millions—feel helpless and diffident. Let not the foreign cloth merchants strengthen the hallucination by indefinite statements. Let them rid themselves of it and help others to do likewise. If they cannot do so, let them not ask for terms but bravely say that they will not stop their foreign cloth trade.

To the weak and unbelieving I make a tangible suggestion. Let them cancel all unexecuted orders. Swaraj is not attained, and if they want to revert to their old occupation, no power can prevent them. Let them lock up their existing stock unless they can sell it outside India, and let those who are poor rely upon the Swaraj Government giving them such compensation as may be necessary. But they should make an inventory of their stock and have it certified by authorized volunteers. The wealthy merchants may not expect any compensation. The loss they may suffer will be part penance for the sin committed against the nation. Lastly, though the last is a bad suggestion, if they have no faith in the country getting Swaraj, let them

keep their stock and begin selling it when the popular movement has died of inanition or been suppressed by force. God forbid, however, that the present enthusiasm is a mere bubble or that it is capable of suppression under the severest repression. I hope, therefore, that whatever the result of the movement, the foreign cloth dealers will see clearly that the terms suggested by them are harmful to the cause and that there is ample protection for them without the terms. Let them be patriotic enough to rise to the occasion and render picketing unnecessary by stopping the sale of foreign cloth of their own motion.

Young India, 24-4-1930

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FOREIGN CLOTH DEALERS

Foreign cloth dealers seem to think that the settlement* gives them the licence to carry on their business just as they please. It is true that picketing is to be robbed of every element of compulsion and that those, who feel they have sealed their stock through coercion, are free without the slightest molestation, to unseal their packages. But they must realize that neither will picketing stop altogether nor will public opinion against foreign cloth wane. Complete banishment of foreign cloth is a vital necessity for the nation for all time, so far as we can foresee the future. If these merchants have any faith in the country, they must know that Swaraj is not far off. But whether it is far or near, the agitation against the foreign cloth as against intoxicating drink and drugs will continue. And when Swaraj is attained, among the first measures of such Government must be prohibition of foreign cloth and drinks and drugs. One impoverishes the nation, the other destroys the very soul.

Young India, 19-3-1931

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* The Gandhi-Irwin Settlement.

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THE GIANT AND THE DWARF

The reader's attention is invited to Shri Walchand Hirachand's letter* published elsewhere. It has undergone some corrections in order to represent my views correctly. The discussion to which the letter refers arose out of the formula that 'there should be no discrimination between the rights of the British mercantile community, firms and companies trading in India and the rights of Indian born subjects.' The formula reads innocent enough, but it covers the most dangerous position.

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*'**Equality of Rights**'

19th March, 1931

My dear Mahatmaji,

With reference to the interview, which the representatives of several industries had with you on Tuesday afternoon, I find that misleading reports of what took place at the said interview have appeared in the press as will be observed from the cuttings enclosed herein. Having regard to the grave importance of the subject I feel it is quite essential that the correct version should be placed before the public. What my friends and I understood you to say could be summarized as follows:

"I am not in a position to say at this stage whether the Congress representatives will attend the Round Table Conference or not, but you can rest assured that the Congress is with you in your protest against this demand for so-called equality of rights made at the Round Table Conference.

"Whatever other countries might have done or not done, India should take such steps to protect and develop her industries as it might suit best her own interests.

The situation today is this. The Britisher is the top-dog and the Indian the under-dog in his own country. In the administration of the country, the Indian generally is a mere clerk. In business he is at best a commission agent getting hardly 5 per cent against his English principal's 95 per cent. In almost every walk of life the Englishman by reason of his belonging to the ruling class occupies a privileged position. It can be said without fear of contradiction and without any exaggeration that he has risen upon the ruin of India's commerce and industries. The cottage industry of India had to perish in order that

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"That the right of the future Indian Parliament to discriminate between Nationals and non-Nationals, whenever Indian interests require it, shall remain intact and unimpaired.

"The claim of Europeans to be treated as a minority community needing protection is untenable.

"No one has any right to pick up a paragraph from the Nehru report and fling it in our face when other parts of the report are discarded.

"I would advise you to carry on propaganda in connection with this important matter.

"As regards the report of the statement said to have been made by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru about the paragraph appearing in the Nehru report of the definition of Citizenship, it should be read together with the interpretation given by Pandit Motilal Nehru on the floor of the Assembly and the decision taken by the All Parties Convention at Calcutta on the subject of the definition of a 'Citizen'."

This to my mind is the gist of your advice to us. If you think that we have understood you correctly as stated above, I shall feel obliged if you will be good enough to give me permission to publish this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Walchand Hirachand

Lancashire might flourish. The Indian shipping had to perish so that British shipping might flourish. In a word we were suppressed in order to enable the British to live on the heights of Simla. It was not a mere picturesque expression of Gokhale's when he said that our growth was stunted. To talk then of no discrimination between Indian interests and English or European is to perpetuate Indian helotage. What is equality of rights between a giant and a dwarf? Before one can think of equality between unequals, the dwarf must be raised to the height of the giant. And since millions living on the plains cannot be translated to the heights of Simla, it follows that those entrenched in those heights must descend to the plains. The process may seem harsh, but it is inevitable if the millions of the plains are to be equals of the privileged few.

It is to be feared, therefore, that before we reach the state of equality, the levelling process will have to be gone through. Justice demands this. It will be a misnomer to call the process one of racial discrimination. There is no such question. There is room enough in our country for every British man, woman and child, if they will shed their privileged position and share our lot. They must then exchange the British army and the force of the cities for the goodwill of a whole nation, which is at their disposal for the asking. Our goodwill is the truest safeguard that we can offer to them, and I make bold to say that it will be infinitely better and more dignified for both of us. In the process there will be apparent discrimination felt everywhere. It need not be felt by those who realize that the present is a wrong and unnatural position. To show that no racial discrimination is involved in this demand one has only to state that Indians who occupy entrenched positions behind their British patrons will also be expected to come to the level of their brethren of the plains. The true formula,

therefore, should be this. In order to remove the existing unnatural inequalities the privileges of the ruling class and those others who have shared them shall be reduced so as to reach a state of equality between all classes and communities.

On the Indian side it must be a point of honour with us to hold British lives and honour as sacred as our own. This does not, need not, mean the ruin of British trade or interest. Those who are resident can rely on their disciplined habits, trained intellect, great industry, and powers of organization to carve out for themselves careers of distinction all the while serving the country of their adoption with the loyalty they have tendered to their own motherland.

British trade where it is not hurtful to India's interest can be placed, when we reach a state of honourable association, on a favoured basis. And an India free from exploitation from within and without must prosper with astonishing rapidity. With growing prosperity, her wants must grow. With her growing wants, must grow also her imports. If at that time Britain is a partner or ally, she may well become India's chief supplier.

That is a dream I should love to realize. I have been party to the settlement for the realization of that dream. I seek every Englishman's help to enable India to gain that end. My notion of *Purna* Swaraj is not isolated independence but healthy and dignified independence. My nationalism, fierce though it is, is not exclusive, is not devised to harm any nation or individual. Legal maxims are not so legal as they are moral. I believe in the eternal truth of '*sic utere tuo ut alienum non lædas.*'*

Young India, 26-3-1931

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* Meaning: Use thy own property so as not to injure thy neighbour's.

FOREIGN CLOTH AND OTHER BRITISH GOODS

It is devoutly to be wished that Englishmen in general and Lancashire mill-owners in particular will realize that India to be free from chronic starvation must for ever banish foreign cloth whether English, Japanese or any other. This is an economic necessity which will not be removed even when India acquires the most complete independence. Among the very first acts of a popular Government would certainly be complete prohibition of foreign cloth.

And foreign cloth will be replaced not by indigenous mill cloth but by khaddar spun and woven in 700,000 villages of India. Though the indigenous mills undoubtedly and automatically benefit by the foreign cloth boycott, the Congress concentrates its main energy in this boycott on behalf of khaddar, i. e. the toiling millions. Let all the foreigners understand that this boycott movement is a mass movement, it is a humanitarian movement. Foreign manufacturers will in the end advance their own and their operatives' interest by realizing and recognizing the intensity and the purity of the movement. It has political consequences, but being a purely economic and humanitarian movement it should command the support of the whole world.

And yet needlessly bitter and unwarranted agitation has been launched out against foreign cloth boycott in England. The tremendous advantage gained by England owing to the removal of the boycott of British goods is hardly noticed. This is not fair play. This suppression of a fact of very great importance makes much more difficult the solution of the Indian question which is already difficult enough. Do the

English public know that the British goods boycott movement is over thirty years old? Do they realize that it gained the greatest impetus during the last struggle, and that it attained success almost as great as the movement against foreign cloth? India will for a long time to come, if not always, need certain things from foreign countries. Today the settlement is provisional. Suppose there is a lasting settlement and an honourable partnership between England and India, will not the trade with England in other articles that India may need to import more than compensate for the loss of the piecegoods and yarn custom which England must forego in every case?

The thing to realize is that India can no longer be the dumping ground for everything English or foreign whether she wants it or not. The days of exploitation are over. We may or may not achieve communal unity. If we fail, we may not have immediate independence. But the world will find that all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jews, for whom India is their home, will fight unitedly to resist the exploitation of India's resources for the benefit of the foreigner. They will resist the ceaseless annual drain which starves all the communities with ruthless impartiality.

Young India, 23-4-1931

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THE LOIN CLOTH

A critic has fallen foul of my remark made before the meeting of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce at Delhi that the Indian civilization must not be allowed to be wiped out by the inroads from the West. The critic has confused Indian civilization with the loin cloth and then condemned it.

Mr. Churchill has been kind enough gratuitously to advertise my loin cloth to the whole world. It has therefore become the fashion to laugh at it as the said critic has done. Let me then explain what it means.

In 1921 Maulana Mahomed Ali was arrested at Waltair whilst he and I were going on a tour to the South. He was torn from Begum Mahomed Ali who was travelling with us. I was deeply moved. She bore the separation bravely and attended meetings in Madras. I left her at Madras and went as far as Madura. On the way I saw in our compartment crowds that were wholly unconcerned with what had happened. Almost without exception they were bedecked in foreign fineries. I entered into conversation with some of them and pleaded for khadi. For I had no other way open to me to secure the release of the Ali Brothers save through khadi. They shook their heads as they said, 'We are too poor to buy khadi, and it is so dear.' I realized the substratum of truth behind the remark. I had my vest, cap, and full dhoti on. When these uttered only partial truth, the millions of compulsorily naked men, save for their langoti four inches wide and nearly as many feet long, gave through their bare limbs the naked truth. What effective answer could I give them, if it was not to divest myself of every inch of clothing I decently could and thus to a still greater extent bring myself in a line with the ill-clad masses? And this I did the very next morning after the Madura meeting.

Here then there is no question of loin cloth civilization. The adoption of the loin cloth was for me a sheer necessity. But in so far as the loin cloth also spells simplicity let it represent Indian civilization. It is a mingling of the cultures represented by the different faiths and influenced by the geographic and other environment in which the cultures have met. Thus Islamic culture is not the same in Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and India, but it is itself influenced by the conditions of the respective countries. Indian culture is therefore Indian. It is neither Hindu, Islamic nor any other, wholly. It is a fusion of all and essentially Eastern. I had in mind that culture. And everyone who calls himself or herself an Indian is bound to treasure that culture, be its trustee, and resist any attack upon it.

European civilization is no doubt suited for the Europeans, but it will mean ruin for India, if we endeavour to copy it. This is not to say that we may not adopt and assimilate whatever may be good and capable of assimilation by us as it does not also mean that even the Europeans will not have to part with whatever evil might have crept into it. The incessant search for material comforts and their multiplication is such an evil, and I make bold to say that the Europeans themselves will have to remodel their outlook, if they are not to perish under the weight of the comforts to which they are becoming slaves. It may be that my reading is wrong, but I know that for India to run after the Golden Fleece is to court certain death. Let us engrave on our hearts the motto of a Western philosopher 'Plain living and high thinking.' Today it is certain that the millions cannot have high living, and we the few who profess to do the thinking for the masses run the risk, in a vain search after high living, of missing high thinking.

Young India, 30-4-1931

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'NO CHANGE OF HEART'

This heading has no reference to change of heart among the rulers. It refers to absence of change of heart among ourselves according to the following impeachment of a Sindhi correspondent:

> "Our womenfolk who had discarded the wearing of foreign cloth in C. D. movement are *now openly once again* purchasing Japan, Switzerland and English fancy cloth, as it is cheap, attractive, and can be had without any difficulty in cloth markets and also from the importing houses from stocks they have in hand. The result is that the male members of their families in these hard times have to incur extra expenses for their new purchases in addition to what they have already spent on *desi sarees* etc. only a few months back, when the boycott movement started, and those Swadeshi clothes are being locked up for the next boycott weather. Further, it will be news to you that the very volunteers who were picketing foreign cloth shops of merchants in C. D. movement are begging the very merchants to give them employment, as there is no work left for them to earn their livelihood. I have read the translation of your article in *Young India* of the 23rd April on 'Foreign cloth and other British goods'. But such articles of yours can never appeal to an Englishman, as long as he finds that no sooner the Congress activities grow less active than the demand for foreign cloth crops up immediately. This clearly indicates that there has been no real change of heart in the Indian people and that the old *love* for foreign cloth is still alive in them. The reasons are not far off to seek. They are dear price of Swadeshi cloth and khaddar, and lull in the Congress work due to the

Gandhi-Irwin pact. You have been praising your Gujarat for the great sacrifices it has made for the country during the last C. D. movement. No doubt Gujaratis in general have done better than other communities, and the part played by them is indeed laudable. But what about the millions of rupees which your Gujarat has pocketed during this movement? What if some of the mill-owners gave you a few lakhs for Congress work or sent one or two members of their families in prison to enjoy jail life in 'A' class? Are they not being compensated by the profits they are making from their mills, and pray at whose cost? Let charity begin at home, but let it not be with the robbings of neighbours' homes. I am a cloth broker in Karachi and write from experience"

I believe that the complaint about foreign cloth is substantially correct. There is not in the cities at least that real change of taste such that the people will not touch foreign cloth whether it comes from England, Japan, France or elsewhere. Though the intellect admits the desirability of abjuring foreign cloth, the heart yearns after the fineries which only come from foreign countries. Love of self predominates over love of the country or rather love of the semi-starved millions.

Picketing of foreign cloth shops has but a limited use. The real thing is the education of the masses in these matters. Better even than education is the example of workers: and better still is teaching the people how to produce cheap khadi through self-spinning. In practice all the three methods will go together. There must be, therefore, imparting to the people a knowledge of the economics of boycott through khadi. People should know from well-chosen illustrations how khadi can bring and has brought prosperity to the villages. People should come in touch with sincere workers who are habitual wearers of khadi, and should be enabled to know how to

prepare their own khadi in their own villages. Congress workers should, therefore, have a competent knowledge of the boycott and khadi literature, they must be honest wearers of khadi, and they must know the cotton processes sufficiently so as to be able to instruct those who would know how to gin, card, spin or even weave.

Those, therefore, who realize that boycott of foreign cloth and manufacture and use of khadi are permanent institutions of the highest economic value will welcome the settlement which enables them to know how far the people have been converted to the national ideal. Our real strength must lie in the people doing in normal times the things they did in abnormal times under the severe pressure of public opinion or worse.

One word as to the mills. I have no tender spot in me for our mills. They are well able to take care of themselves. They have still many limitations to overcome. They have not yet put the national interest before that of the agents, owners and shareholders. But after having said all this I would like the correspondent to test the truth of the fact that they have striven this time to respond to the national call, be it to ever so small an extent. And this apart from the financial aid they might have given to the movement. I should count that help of no import, if they did not regulate prices and production. I believe that they made an honest attempt in that direction.

Much, however, has yet to be done by them. They have not yet frankly recognized the premier place khadi has in national economy. They have not yet organized the foreign cloth merchants for change of their trade to Swadeshi. They have not yet learnt the inestimable value of regarding themselves as trustees for the whole nation including the mill-hands. But this change will come if Congressmen will play the game. Conversion, not coercion, must be the aim.

Young India, 14-5-1931

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IN 1828

Shri Satish Chandra Dasgupta of the Khadi Pratisthan is editing a Bengali newspaper called *Rastra-vani.* He recently unearthed a letter addressed to the editor of *Samachar Darpan* which was published in Bengali in the twenties of the 19th century. As the letter was of great importance showing how the charkha was being slowly destroyed and how it was valued by women in those days, he has published it in his paper and sent me its translation. I am sure it will be read with interest by all who are at all interested in the khadi movement. Here is the letter:

"**The Representation of a Spinner**

To the Editor, The *Samachar.*

I am a spinner. After having suffered a great deal, I am writing this letter. Please publish this in your paper. I have heard that, if it is published, it will reach those who may lighten my distress and fulfil my desire. Please do not slight this letter from a poor sufferer.

I am very unfortunate. It would be a long story if I were to write all about my sufferings. Still I must write in brief.

When my age was five and a half *gandas* (22) I became a widow with three daughters. My husband left nothing at the time of his death wherewith to maintain my old father-and-mother-in-law and three daughters. He had several businesses. I sold my jewellery for his *shraddha* ceremony. At last as we were on the verge of starvation God showed me a way by which we could save ourselves. I began to spin on takli and charkha.

In the morning I used to do the usual work of cleaning the household and then sit at the charkha till noon, and after cooking and feeding the old parents and daughters I would have my fill and sit spinning fine yarn on the takli. Thus I used to spin about a tola. The weavers used to visit our houses and buy the charkha yarn at three tolas per rupee. Whatever amount I wanted as advance from the weavers, I could get for the asking. This saved us from cares about food and cloth.

In a few years' time I got together seven *ganda* rupees (Rs. 28). With this I married one daughter. And in the same way all three daughters. There was no departure from the caste customs. Nobody looked down upon these daughters because I gave all concerned, the *ghatakas* and caste people, what was due to them. When my father-in-law died I spent eleven *ganda* rupees (Rs. 44) on his *shraddha*. This money was lent me by the weavers which I repaid in a year and a half. And all this through the grace of the charkha. Now for 3 years we two women, mother-in-law and I, are in want of food. The weavers do not call at the house for buying yarn. Not only this, if the yarn is sent to the market, it is not sold even at one-fourth the old prices. I do not know how it happened. I asked many about it. They say that *bilati* yarn is being largely imported. The weavers buy that yarn and weave. I had a sense of pride that *bilati* yarn could not be equal to my yarn, but when I got *bilati* yarn I say that it was better than my yarn. I heard that its price is Rs. 3 or Rs. 4 per seer. I beat my brow and said, ' Oh God, there are sisters more distressed even than I. I had thought that all men of *Bilat* were rich, but now I see that there are women there who are poorer than I.' I fully realized the poverty which induced those poor women to spin. They have sent the product of so much toil out here because they

could not sell it there. It would have been something if they were sold here at good prices. But it has brought our ruin only. Men cannot use the cloth out of this yarn even for two months; it rots away. I therefore entreat the spinners over there that, if they will consider this representation, they will be able to judge whether it is fair to send yarn here or not.

Shantipur — A representation from a suffering spinner.
SAMACHAR DARPAN"

The reader will not fail to observe the nobility of the writer who in her blissful ignorance felt that yarn was spun by the hands of her *bilati* sisters poorer than herself, and therefore felt for them. Alas, her belief was baseless. She could have stood her own if the foreign yarn had been hand-spun. She could have stood her own even against the foreign yarn, if behind it there had been no policy of determination to capture the Indian trade and kill the national village industry.

Young India, 21-5-1931

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IS IT AN ECONOMIC NECESSITY?

A contribution in *The Times of India* (26-5-31) has the following:

> "Mahatma Gandhi, in his latest pronouncement concerning the purpose and procedure of picketing, has reiterated his belief that the exclusion of foreign cloth is an 'economic necessity to India'. Perhaps he will explain in the next issue of *Young India* in what sense he uses that term. The information required can be supplied by answering certain questions prompted by the piecegoods situation as it is now developing:
>
> 1. To what extent has the decline of 1,000 million yards in the imports of cotton piecegoods in 1930-31 been balanced by the increased production of indigenous cloth based upon the processes of hand spinning and weaving?
>
> 2. To what extent has it been balanced by increase in mill production?
>
> 3. Will the boycott be persisted in, regardless of the extent to which imported goods are displaced by hand-made and mill-made goods respectively?
>
> 4. If so, to what extent is the boycott in the interest of Bombay as distinct from other provinces?
>
> Clearly, if the endeavour to revive the village industry has definitely failed, as appears to be the case, however reluctant Mahatma Gandhi may be to acknowledge defeat in a campaign so close to his heart, then the time has arrived, in the interest of public honesty, to transfer the formal control of the boycott campaign to the Cotton Millowners' Associations acting as principals, instead of continuing

the camouflage of control by the Congress, acting as agents."

The answers to the specific questions are:

1. It is impossible to answer the question in terms of yards, because khadi is not all commercially produced. Home manufacture of khadi for use by manufacturers themselves is proceeding on an ever-increasing scale, which it is impossible for the poor All India Spinners' Association to measure.

2. The indigenous mills are undoubtedly playing an important part in making good the deficit.

3. It will be, subject to what follows.

4. The interest of Bombay is the interest of India. The writer perhaps includes Ahmedabad in Bombay, and evidently ignores the other important mills scattered all over India.

I have answered the specific questions rather for the satisfaction of the writer of the article than of myself or the public. The public should know that I should lose all interest in the boycott of foreign cloth, if I really discovered that khadi was a failure, as the writer is sure it has proved to be already. I do not know the source of his assurance. But as the party chiefly concerned in khadi production and propaganda, I make bold to say that it is not only not a failure but is making sure though slow headway all over India. I therefore do reiterate the claim that boycott is an economic necessity for the masses. It may sound strange, but it is true, that it is not in the same sense and to the same extent an economic necessity for the mills as for khadi. Mills have undoubtedly flourished beyond their expectation by reason of the boycott, but they could have, as they were doing, eked out an existence without the boycott. They could always share with Britain and Japan the exploitation of starving millions by dumping their manufactures among the ignorant famishing millions who, forgetting that by using their leisure hours they could manufacture their

own cloth, would buy the flimsy mill calico and thus doubly injure themselves. The boycott cannot, therefore, be wholly transferred to the mills even if they wanted it. And if they undertook it, it would fail. The fact cannot be concealed that the mills are interested in the boycott chiefly for their agents' and their shareholders' profits. The Congress is concerned with the boycott wholly in the interest of the masses.

The writer, and for that matter many others, do not know that the khadi method is a new method in economics, as non-violence is a new method in politics. The khadi method is bound to confound the orthodox economic theories, as non-violence has almost already confounded the orthodox political methods. The new method lends itself to the orthodox statistical demonstration only to a certain extent. It is the khadi spirit that is responsible for the phenomenal success of the boycott. The boycott itself is no new cry. It is as old as, if not older than, the Bengal partition period. But the hope of success was born with the rebirth of khadi in 1919, and the hope was partly realized last year when the khadi spirit was at its highest. The real manifestation of the khadi spirit has still to come. And when it does, as it is bound to, come, and that too sooner than most people expect, there will be neither picketing nor statistical demonstration required.

The Times of India writer suggests that the boycott is designed or calculated merely to benefit the mills to the injury of the masses. The suggestion would have foundation, if there was no khadi behind the boycott. Let the writer and critics like him remember that the Congress formula in so many words is 'boycott through khadi'. The Indian mills come in to supplement khadi. But the boycott would stand in spite of the Indian mills if they opposed khadi. Many did oppose it at one time. Their indifference to khadi was still more marked. But be it said to their credit that they have somewhat recognized the time spirit, and even

though yet half-heartedly in the majority of cases, they have made terms with khadi. Some have become thorough converts to it, and will not even mind losing, if they must, for its sake. The Indian mills are, therefore, in no sense of the term principals in the boycott campaign. They benefit no doubt, and they will, at least for the time being, increasingly benefit, but the ratio of increase will be in direct proportion to the correctness of their conduct in their dealings with khadi.

The writer, as well as the reader, will now understand why India, that is to say the masses, must benefit in the long run even by the recent legislative protection given to the mills. The prices of mill cloth must of course go up. It is for the Congress to carry on ceaseless propaganda so as to keep the mills from the profiteering temptation, and to teach the masses that their economic welfare lies in the manufacture of khadi in their own cottages through hand-spinning. When once foreign cloth is out of the way, indigenous mills will readily suit their prices and production to khadi, or will themselves face a boycott even like foreign mills.

Young India, 4-6-1931

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THE LAW OF SWADESHI

Swadeshi is the law of laws enjoined by the present age. Spiritual laws like Nature's laws need no enacting; they are self-acting. But through ignorance or other causes man often neglects or disobeys them. It is then that vows are needed to steady one's course. A man who is by temperament a vegetarian needs no vow to strengthen his vegetarianism. For, the sight of animal food, instead of tempting him, would only excite his disgust. The law of Swadeshi is ingrained in the basic nature of man, but it has today sunk into oblivion. Hence the necessity for the vow of Swadeshi. In its ultimate and spiritual sense Swadeshi stands for the final emancipation of the human soul from its earthly bondage. For, this earthly tabernacle is not its natural or permanent abode, it is a hindrance in its onward journey, it stands in the way of its realizing its oneness with other lives. A votary of Swadeshi, therefore, in his striving to identify himself with the entire creation, seeks to be emancipated from the bondage of the physical body.

If this interpretation of Swadeshi be correct, then it follows that its votary will as a first duty dedicate himself to the service of his immediate neighbours. This involves exclusion or even sacrifice of the interests of the rest, but the exclusion or the sacrifice would be apparent only. Pure service of one's neighbours can never, from its very nature, result in disservice to those who are remotely situated; rather the contrary. 'As with the individual so with the universe' is an unfailing principle which we would do well to lay to heart. On the other hand a man who allows himself to be lured by 'the distance scene' and runs to the

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ends of the earth for service, is not only foiled in his ambition but fails in his duty towards his neighbours also. Take a concrete instance. In the particular place where I live I have certain persons as my neighbours, some relations and dependants. Naturally they all feel, as they have a right to, that they have a claim on me, and look to me for help and support. Suppose now I leave them all at once and set out to serve people in a distant place. My decision would throw my little world of neighbours and dependants out of gear, while my gratuitous knight-errantry would more likely than not disturb the atmosphere in the new place. Thus a culpable neglect of my immediate neighbours and an unintended disservice to the people whom I wish to serve would be the first fruits of my violation of the principles of Swadeshi.

It is not difficult to multiply such instances. That is why the Gita says: "It is better to die performing one's duty or *swadharma*, but *paradharma*, or another's duty, is fraught with danger." Interpreted in terms of one's physical environment this gives us the law of Swadeshi. What the Gita says with regard to *swadharma* equally applies to Swadeshi also, for Swadeshi is *swadharma* applied to one's immediate environment.

It is only when the doctrine of Swadeshi is wrongly understood that mischief results, e. g. it would be a travesty of the doctrine of Swadeshi, if in order to coddle my family I set about grabbing money by all means, fair or foul. The law of Swadeshi requires me no more than to discharge my legitimate obligations towards my family by just means, and the attempt to do so will reveal to me the universal code of conduct. The practice of Swadeshi can never do harm to any one, and if it does, it is not *swadharma* but egotism that moves me.

There may come occasions when a votary of Swadeshi may be called upon to sacrifice his family at the altar of universal service. Such an act of willing

immolation will then constitute the highest service rendered to the family. "Whosoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whosoever loses his life for the Lord's sake will find it," holds good for the family group no less than the individual. Take another instance. Supposing there is an outbreak of the plague in my village and in trying to serve the victims of the epidemic I, my wife and children and all the rest of my family are wiped out of existence, then in inducing those dearest and nearest to join me I will not have acted as the destroyer of my family but on the contrary as its truest friend. In Swadeshi there is no room for selfishness, or if there is selfishness in it, it is of the highest type which is not different from the highest altruism. Swadeshi in its purest form is the acme of universal service.

It was by following this line of argument that I hit upon khadi as a necessary and the most important corollary of the principle of Swadeshi in its application to society. "What is the kind of service," I asked myself, "that the teeming millions of India most need at the present time, that can be easily understood and appreciated by all, that is easy to perform and will at the same time enable the crores of our semi-starved countrymen to live," and the reply came that it is the universalization of khadi or the spinning wheel alone that can fulfil these conditions.

Let no one suppose that the practice of Swadeshi through khadi will harm the foreign mill-owners. A thief who is weaned from his vice or is made to return the property that he has stolen is not harmed thereby; on the contrary he is the gainer consciously in the one case, unconsciously in the other. Similarly, if all the opium addicts or the drunkards in the world were to shake themselves free from their vice, the canteen keepers or the opium vendors who would be deprived of their customers could not be said to be losers. They would be the gainers in the truest sense of the

word. The elimination of the ' wages of sin ' is never a loss either to the individual concerned or to society; it is pure gain.

It is the greatest delusion to suppose that the duty of Swadeshi begins and ends with merely spinning so much yarn anyhow and wearing khadi made from it. Khadi is the first indispensable step towards the discharge of *Swadeshi Dharma* towards society. One often meets men who wear khadi but in all other things indulge their taste for foreign manufactures with a vengeance. Such men cannot be said to be practising Swadeshi. They are simply following the fashion. A votary of Swadeshi will carefully study his environment and try to help his neighbours wherever possible by giving preference to local manufactures even if they are of an inferior grade or dearer in price than things manufactured elsewhere. He will try to remedy their defects, but will not give them up because of their defects and take to foreign manufactures.

But even Swadeshi like any other good thing can be ridden to death if it is made a fetish. That is a danger that must be guarded against. To reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign and to go on wasting national time and money to promote manufactures in one's country for which it is not suited, would be criminal folly and a negation of the Swadeshi spirit. A true votary of Swadeshi will never harbour ill-will towards the foreigner; he will not be moved by antagonism towards anybody on earth. Swadeshism is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service that has its roots in the purest ahimsa, i. e. love.

Young India, 18-6-1931

JAPANESE OR BRITISH?

That from the economic standpoint (and that is the only standpoint important for the millions) boycott of Japanese cloth is much the most important is clear from the following letter from Shri H. P. Modi, President, Bombay Mill-owners' Association:

> "The piecegoods coming into this country from abroad may be divided into four important classifications, namely, grey, bleached, coloured, and artificial silk goods. I have taken out the figures of the imports of each of these classes from both the United Kingdom and Japan for the last four months of 1930 and the first four months of 1931, and give them below:

	UNITED KINGDOM Last 4 months 1930	UNITED KINGDOM First 4 months 1931	JAPAN Last 4 months 1930	JAPAN First 4 months 1931
	(in millions of yards)			
Grey goods ...	18	18	53	77
Bleached goods ...	39	66	8	14
Coloured goods ...	28	32	16	28
Art. silk piecegoods	...	...	7	24
Total ...	85	116	84	143

> From this statement it will be seen that, except in the bleached goods trade (which was formerly a monopoly), Great Britain practically stands where she did a few months ago, though her trade has been recently showing some improvement. In the case of Japanese goods, however, the position is strikingly different. In grey goods Japanese imports have increased by 45%; in bleached and coloured

goods by 75%; and in artificial silk goods by over 240%. In bleached goods and artificial silk piece-goods the imports during the first four months of this year have been at a higher rate than ever before, and in grey and coloured goods the figures are rapidly approaching pre-boycott levels, and the indications are that they will eventually overtake them. It is conceivable that in the end Japanese goods may largely take the place of Lancashire goods — they constitute even now the largest volume of imports—and India may find herself in an even worse position than before.

For many years it has been evident that the most serious competitor of the Indian textile industry is Japan rather than Great Britain. That this is so may be judged from the fact that in 1929–30, which may be regarded as a normal year, the imports of piecegoods from Great Britain were 1,248 million yards as against 1,622 million yards in 1924-25; whereas the imports from Japan rose from 155 million yards in 1924-25 to 562 million yards in 1929–30.

Special attention must be drawn in this connection to the tremendous increase in the importations of artificial silk piecegoods from Japan. In the first four months of this year no less than 24 million yards have been imported as against 7 million yards in the last four months of 1930. I would like to point out here that the hand-loom industry is being even more hard hit by this than the mill industry, since it is estimated that 80% of the artificial silk yarn previously imported was used by the hand-loom industry, and only 20% by the mill industry.

Another point which I should like to emphasize is that practically most lines of Japanese goods are of coarse or medium counts, and that the great bulk of them could be manufactured by Indian mills from Indian cotton. This is not the case with the bulk

of the piecegoods which used to be imported from Great Britain.

Strenuous attempts are at present being made by Indian mills to manufacture cloths to replace those imported from Japan, but to compete in price, Indian mills will have to manufacture these lines at a distinct loss, and this they cannot be expected to do unless they feel assured that their efforts will ultimately bear fruit through the public conscience being aroused with regard to the menace of Japanese competition and the disastrous effects it is having on India's interests.

I do not wish to burden this letter with an enumeration of the various causes which enable Japan to market her goods at such low prices. All that I wished to do was to point out that the classes of goods which Japan is importing and the price at which they are sold, constitute just as serious a menace to the Indian industry as they have proved to Lancashire trade."

If, therefore, there is any laxity on the part of boycott workers, they will remember that emphasis on boycott of British cloth will be of no avail whatsoever from the economic viewpoint. Incidentally one can see how British cloth has been hit by Japanese cloth.

Young India, 18-6-1931

SUPERSTITIONS DIE HARD

Mr. Henry Eaton writes from California:

"I am not a British sympathizer. My ancestors fought to liberate themselves from the British in 1776. But as far as I can see from what I read in the papers it would be more harmful than beneficial if Britain got out of India. I do not mean to infer that India could not govern herself, although I cannot but see that such an attempt would be very arduous at the present time. But if Britain gets out of India, who is going to keep the Russians or any other nation out? Certainly India, from all I can learn of her, has no adequate army to protect herself.

But perhaps you would prefer Russian masters to English. Russia is waiting there at the Khyber Pass. Russia understands the East. Her people are a mingling of the occidental and the oriental. But Russia has Western culture. Any relation India could have with her would have to be subordinate. Personally I am not antagonistic to Russia. Her war against capitalism is the great hope of Western civilization. Here in America our greatest capitalist, Henry Ford, realizes the inevitability of an equitable distribution of wealth. But Russia as master of India does not particularly appeal to me. With Russia as master India would lose her identity as a culture. With England India has always retained that identity.

Perhaps you do not fear the Russian menace as much as we of the Western world. In America many of us are sure that, once Britain is out of India, Russia will step in. We cannot visualize the India of the present, the India with her caste system

and her primitive methods of manufacture and agriculture, defending herself against Western invasion. You have no national organization for protection. There is no unity in India. Unity has been essential to the rise of Western culture and civilization. There also seems to be no progress, as we look on progress in the West, in India. You yourself advocate the return to the old methods of weaving. Have you with your great intelligence no realization of the inevitability of change, of moving forward? You cannot go back from old age to childhood. How then can you go back from enlightened methods of weaving to unenlightened methods and hope to gain anything? While you work in the old way that is hard, you realize that there is a new way that is easy, and you cannot be satisfied with the old hard way. You see how Japan has risen to power by adopting the new way, and even China is awakening. India alone seems not to realize the importance of the new ways of the world. How is it that you, her great leader, do not preach progress to your people?

These are the two questions that puzzle me greatly. Why does India not realize the Russian menace, if she becomes free of England? And why does Mahatma Gandhi not make his people realize that their freedom lies first of all in adopting the new system of labour with the help of machinery? I should very much like to have you, who alone must know the answers, tell them to me.

By birth and heritage I am a citizen of the United States of America, but I take such a personal interest in the affairs of the world that I like to think of myself in my little way as a citizen of the world. At the University I attend here in California, the question of India often arises. The general sympathies are with you against the British. However, as I myself can understand the present situation

in India, it seems that of the two evils British control in India is the lesser. The other evil, as I have already tried to explain, is Russian domination. But what we all want to know is how you feel about the matter."

This letter betrays two superstitions. One of them is that India is unfit to govern herself because she cannot defend herself and is torn with internal dissensions. The writer gratuitously assumes that, if Britain withdraws, Russia is ready to pounce upon India. This is an insult to Russia. Is Russia's one business to rule over those peoples who are not ruled by Britain? And if Russia has such nefarious designs upon India, does not the writer see that the same power that will oust the British from domination is bound to prevent any other domination? If the control is handed to India's representatives by agreement, there must be some condition whereby Britain will guarantee protection from foreign aggression as a penance for her conscious or unconscious neglect during all these past years to fit India for defending herself.

Personally, even under agreement I should rely more upon the capacity of the nation to offer civil resistance to any aggressor as it did last year with partial success in the case of the British occupier. Complete success awaits complete assimilation of non-violence in thought, word and deed by the nation. An ocular demonstration of the success of nation-wide satyagraha must be a prelude to its world-wide acceptance and hence as a natural corollary to the admission of the futility of armament. The only antidote to armament, which is the visible symbol of violence, is satyagraha, the visible symbol of non-violence. But the writer is oppressed also by the fear of our dissensions. In the first place, they are grossly exaggerated in transmission to the West. In the second place, they are hardened during foreign control. Imperial rule means *divide et impera*. They must, there-

fore, melt with the withdrawal of the frigid foreign rule and the introduction of the warmth-giving sunshine of real freedom.

The second superstition is harder still, I mean that about the spinning wheel. This is shared by some even in India. The writer begs the question when he calls the method of machinery enlightened and that of the hand ignorant. It has still to be proved that displacement of the hand by the machine is a blessing in every case. Nor is it true that that which is easy is better than that which is hard. It is still less proved that every change is a blessing or that everything old is fit only to be discarded.

I hold that the machinery method is harmful when the same thing can be done easily by millions of hands not otherwise occupied. It is any day better and safer for the millions spread in the seven hundred thousand villages of India scattered over an area nineteen hundred miles long and fifteen hundred broad that they manufacture their clothing in their own villages even as they prepare their own food. These villages cannot retain the freedom they have enjoyed from time immemorial, if they do not control the production of prime necessaries of life. Western observers hastily argue from Western conditions that what may be true of them must be true of India where conditions are different in so many material respects. Application of the laws of economics must vary with varying conditions.

The machinery method is no doubt easy. But it is not necessarily a blessing on that account. The descent to a certain place is easy but dangerous. The method of the hand is a blessing, in the present case at any rate, because it is hard. If the craze for the machinery method continues, it is highly likely that a time will come when we shall be so incapacitated and weak that we shall begin to curse ourselves for having forgotten the use of the living machines given to us by God. Millions cannot keep themselves fit by games

and athletics. And why should they exchange the useful, productive, hardy occupations for the useless, unproductive and expensive games and exercises? They are all right today for a change and recreation. They will jar upon us when they become a necessary occupation in order that we may have the appetite for eating the food in the production of which we had no hand or part.

Lastly, I do not subscribe to the belief that everything old is bad. Truth is old and difficult. Untruth has many attractions. But I would gladly go back to the very old Golden Age of Truth. Good old brown bread is any day superior to the pasty white bread which has lost much of its nutritive value in going through the various processes of refinement. The list of old and yet good things can be endlessly multiplied. The spinning wheel is one such thing, at any rate for India.

When India becomes self-supporting, self-reliant, and proof against temptations and exploitation, she will cease to be the object of greedy attraction for any power in the West or the East, and will then feel secure without having to carry the burden of expensive armament. Her internal economy will be India's strongest bulwark against aggression.

Young India, 2-7-1931

JAPANESE MENACE

A correspondent writes:

"The report of the British Cotton Mission to the Far East, surveying the position of Lancashire piecegoods trade in China, furnishes an effective answer to the cry that connects the depression in Lancashire with the Indian boycott movement. In China the situation was not complicated by any boycott movement, and yet the imports of cotton piecegoods from Great Britain into China are shown to have fallen from 587.3 million yards in 1909-13 to 69.4 million yards in 1930. Lancashire is shown to have been practically beaten out of the Chinese market by Japanese enterprise. The Commission's conclusions and recommendations show that the difficulties of Lancashire lie really in the effective competition from Japan, and the remedies they suggest are, therefore, fundamental. The following sentences taken from the Commission's report will form interesting reading:

'Lancashire depends on foreign markets rather than on the home market, and in the past China has been one of her most important markets.

'In 1912 she produced 8,000 million linear yards; in 1924, 5,600 million linear yards; and in 1930 her production was probably considerably below 4,000 million linear yards.

'Great Britain exported to China and Hongkong in the years 1909-13 an average of 587 million linear yards; in 1929, 210 millions; in 1930 only 69 millions. In 1913 Britain's exports to China and Hongkong were about four times the value of those of Japan, but in 1930 they were only 1/6 part of the value of Japan's. In this year (1930) Japan shipped to China and Hongkong no less than between 9 and 10 times

the quantity of cotton piece-goods that were shipped by Great Britain.

'The purchasing power of the vast mass of the people in China has been so reduced that quality has become quite a secondary consideration, and if Lancashire is to recover any of the ground she has lost in the China market, then she must place her goods on the market at prices not higher than those of her principal competitor Japan. Unless this is done her trade with China must continue to decline.

'At every stage — from the purchase of the raw cotton by the spinners up to and including the packing of the finished cloth—Japan has an advantage in costs over Lancashire. The advantage at some stages may be small, but the cumulative effect is considerable.

'We are satisfied that there will be no improvement of the situation in China without a radical alteration of our methods of exporting and marketing Lancashire goods.

'An alteration of the marketing system is not, however, by itself sufficient.

'We would, therefore, urge all engaged in the industry, from the buying of the raw cotton to the sale of the finished article, including those engaged in cotton importing, spinning, manufacturing, bleaching, dyeing and finishing and merchanting (both employers and employees) to consider separately and jointly how costs can be reduced so as to enable yarn and cloth to be placed on the market at competitive prices.

'We desire to emphasize that our object is not the lowering of the standard of living at home but the very opposite. We have at present many thousands in Lancashire out of employment and many more underemployed. We believe from what we have seen in the East that the position will tend to become worse unless it is faced unflinchingly. It is

of little use to maintain anomalies in wage lists or in present piece prices, if their maintenance involves less employment and reduced earnings for the operatives in Lancashire. Similarly it is of little use for any section of producers or merchants to maintain, or attempt to maintain, uneconomic systems if, as a result, our export trade in cotton piecegoods — once the pride of Great Britain — continues to decrease.

'Unless radical changes are made there is no hope of Lancashire increasing her trade in the markets of the East. Indeed, until she can offer her goods at competitive prices, she will continue to lose ground. There is no easy path to success. Some present sacrifice may even be called for. A grave responsibility rests on all in the industry. Lancashire is faced with the greatest crisis in her history.'

The condition of Lancashire piecegoods trade in India is very much the same as that in China. Here again whatever decline has taken place in the share of Great Britain in the import of foreign piecegoods into India is due to the effective competition of Japan. While Lancashire must study the real facts of the situation and find its own methods, the situation has a lesson for us also. If we allow Japan to take the place of Lancashire, our last state will be no better than the first."

However shocking it may be for our pride, the quotation given by my correspondent has a double lesson. It is not our boycott so much as the Japanese efficiency that has ousted British piecegoods, and if our mills do not keep pace with the times, Japan will win the race, notwithstanding all the effort of the Congress to infuse the Swadeshi spirit among the people. A prohibitive duty will not be permitted to protect inefficiency. I know that in Japan the people and the State are one. But even when we arrive at that state, efficiency will be necessary, perhaps more than now.

Young India, 16-7-1931

FOREIGN CLOTH PLEDGE

The Working Committee adopted the following pledge for the guidance of foreign cloth merchants and Congress workers:

> " Resolved that any pledge in connection with exclusion of foreign cloth and yarn inconsistent with the following pledge shall be held to be invalid:
>
> 'We pledge ourselves that we shall observe the following conditions so long as the Working Committee of the Congress does not give express permission by resolution to do otherwise:
>
> '1. We undertake not to purchase or sell any foreign yarn made from cotton, wool or silk, or cloth manufactured from such yarn.
>
> '2. We undertake not to purchase or sell any yarn or cloth manufactured by mills that have not accepted the Congress conditions.
>
> '3. We undertake not to sell in this country any foreign yarn or silk or wool or cloth manufactured from such yarn or silk or wool that may be lying with us.' "

All concerned will note that this pledge supersedes all the pledges that have been accepted haphazard by Congress workers or organizations. Merchants should make up their minds that this exclusion of foreign cloth is not a temporary affair. They must either take to Swadeshi cloth trade, better still khadi, or find some other occupation consistent with the national interest.

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SOME POSERS

Here are some posers for lovers of khaddar:

> "Will you kindly explain to me how the resolution passed at the Karachi Congress in connection with khadi propaganda is going to help that object? The indigenous mill-owners have been appealed to to give their moral support to the supplementary village industry of hand-spinning by themselves using hand-spun. Now if the mill-owners enjoy the unrestricted privilege of carrying on their present mills with a view to developing them, will the mere use of hand-spun be construed into moral support to khaddar? In my humble opinion there is no moral support unless mill-owners discover the antagonism between mills and the charkha and honestly try gradually to restrict their activity. Then it passes one's comprehension how khaddar can hold its own if mills go on producing finer and cheaper stuff to be used in place of khaddar. Then again, asking the mill-owners to keep down the prices of cloths will be a sure means of killing khaddar."

These are all good questions. There is no doubt that, if the personal use by mill-owners of khaddar is not a token of their inner conviction, it is of no use and may well be a token of hypocrisy. If there is an inner conviction, they will conduct their mills so as never to harm khaddar, even as a gardener so disposes his hardy plants as not to harm saplings. The Congress toleration of mills is based on the belief that the mills can serve a useful purpose during the transition stage. Immediate exclusion of foreign cloth becomes easier through the indigenous mills if they work in sympathy with the movement. It is easier

for khaddar to deal and compete with the indigenous mills alone than to do so with them plus English, Japanese, Italian and other mills. The increase in the number of indigenous mills need not frighten khaddarites. The increase is no doubt proof that the economic influence of khaddar is not yet fully felt. When khaddar becomes universal, many mills may find their occupation gone. It is needless to speculate whether khaddar will obtain such a hold on the people. It will depend upon the faithfulness of the workers. There is no flaw in the reasoning applied to khaddar. It is merely a question of giving a true education to the millions of villagers, of changing national taste, of realizing the tremendous power of the wheel to banish pauperism from the land. It is no small thing to be able to show a way the adoption of which will be an insurance against starvation and its attendant results.

As to the second poser, the necessity of the mills producing finer cloths cannot be questioned. In the khaddar age the people had fine khaddar. It is produced even now but not in such quantity, not so cheap as to be available to all who desire it. Again, therefore, during the transition stage the mills may be encouraged to manufacture fine cloths. And it is easy enough to see that restriction of mill production to finer counts is wholly beneficial to khaddar. The pity of it is that the mills do not respond sufficiently to the national demand.

Lastly as to the prices. Surely the writer does not suggest that mills should charge high prices in order to let khaddar live. As the author of the revival of khaddar I must confess that it never entered my head that I should wish for high prices of mill-manufactures for the protection of khaddar. It is one thing to seek protection against killing competition, wholly another to wish for higher prices of commodities produced by a few for many even for the protection of an analogous industry. Khaddar economics is

wholly different from the ordinary. The latter takes no note of the human factor. The former wholly concerns itself with the human. The latter is frankly selfish, the former necessarily unselfish. Competition and therefore prices are eliminated from the conception of khaddar. There is no competition between hotels and domestic kitchens. It never enters into the head of the queen of the house to calculate the cost of her labour, the floor space, etc. She simply knows that to conduct the domestic kitchen is as much her duty as it is to bring up children. If she were to count the cost, the logic of facts would irresistibly drive her to the destruction of her kitchen as well as her children. Some have done both. But thank God the cult makes no promise of appreciable increase. It is our innate laziness which prevents us from seeing that we sinned against Indian humanity when we destroyed the domestic wheel. Let us repent of our sin and return to the peace-giving wheel.

Young India, 16-7-1931

WHAT THE MILL-OWNERS CAN DO

The correspondent, whose letter about Japanese enterprise I gave last week, sends also the following:

> "Nothing perhaps emerges so clearly from the perusal of the report of the British Cotton Commission to the Far East as the tremendous energy with which Japan has not only excluded practically all imports of foreign piecegoods into her territories but has also captured a number of markets abroad for the products of her own people. The encouragement and support that the national Government gives to trade and industries have no doubt helped to bring about this result. But the State support is not in itself so remarkable as the great urge of national sentiment in favour of expanding export trade. 'We found,' says the report, 'that if there is one tenet in the industrial and commercial world of Japan, it is that Japan feels that her destiny is bound up with the necessity to build up an ever-growing export trade . . . It seems to her essential that, if she is to play the part to which her destiny is leading her, she must concentrate on finding markets abroad for the products of her people. It is as though Japan as a nation, from the statesman down to the ordinary citizen, realizes that it is impossible that the standard of living of the great bulk of her people can be allowed to lag behind without risk of national schism.'
>
> With such sentiments it is no wonder that the Government, no less than the industrialists, count no loss too great in finding fresh markets for the nation's products. One of the most remarkable measures that the Government passed during the last year was a

bill under which the Government, on the advice of a responsible Minister, will reimburse exporters to the amount of 70 per cent of losses incurred on shipments to certain specified and undeveloped markets. But the Government's active encouragement and support are matched by the readiness of the industrialists of Japan to take risk. This is illustrated in the practice, said to be prevalent throughout Japan, of what is called 'taking a view'. Cost in that connection is quite a secondary consideration. The loss is considered repayed if the market is captured. It is said that owing to this method of trading over a number of years one prominent business house, Nippon Menkwa, has suffered a deficit of not less than £3,800,000. Another, Gosho Kabushiki Kaisha, wrote down its capital fom £2,500,000 to £1,800,000. The passing of its dividend by Toyo Menkwa Kaisha in April last year is also said to be due to this method of trading. 'But,' continues the report, 'what of that, appears to be the view, so long as Japan's cotton textile industry can be expanded?' She is out to expand her export trade, seeking with deliberation for new markets.

The Indian mill-owners, if they will, may draw some lessons from the foregoing facts for themselves. Here in India we do not wish to capture new markets, we want only to preserve the domestic market for ourselves. If the Japanese industrialist can cheerfully write off large sums out of his capital in the effort to find out new markets, cannot the Indian capitalist be persuaded at least to refrain from making profits for a certain period in the interest of India's more restricted and therefore more laudable effort? Cannot the dividends on capital be passed off for a few years? Cannot mill agents patriotically refrain from taking their commission for a certain period, or at least restrict it to a certain minimum? If they will do these things, our capitalists and mill-owners can

claim to have contributed their quota to the national effort."

It is true, as the correspondent says, that we do not want to capture new markets. But we must dare to suffer to exclude foreign cloth from ours. Will the mill-owners do it?

Young India, 23-7-1931

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LANCASHIRE v. JAPAN

Shri H. P. Modi writes :

"I have read with great interest the brief announcement you have made in connection with the rumour that you might visit Lancashire when you go to England for the Round Table Conference. I hope you will do so, and will give British manufacturers an opportunity of understanding your position and that of the Congress. My view of the matter is that, while it is of national importance that the requirements of the people of India should be met by cloth manufactured or made in the country, foreign cloth cannot be kept out unless and until the manufacturing capacity of India is considerably increased. When the present depression passes away, it is certain the consumption of cloth by our people will increase, and if the production of mills, khadi and hand-loom weavers is not equal to the demand, foreign cloth must come in to a greater or lesser extent. The problem then resolves itself into one of ways and means of promoting the indigenous industry. One of the greatest obstacles in the way of such expansion is the organized competition which the industry is experiencing from Japan. Year after year she selects special lines for attack, and having established herself in these lines, moves on to attack other lines to the great detriment of the Indian manufacturer. As I have explained to you more than once, this competition not only affects the consumption of particular varieties of Indian cloth, but also the price of the whole range of manufactures of Indian mills. It may be that in the course of time, when mills have recovered from the effects of

the depression through which the industry has been passing, and are able to spend money on new equipment and to take other measures for the reorganization of the industry, and when Labour has, by education and other means, been brought to a state of greater efficiency, the competitive capacity of India may develop to an extent which would do away with the necessity of special measures of protection; but until that stage is reached India must pursue a vigorous tariff policy. Very highly organized countries like the United States have done so, and India, in the infancy of her industrial progress, cannot but follow the example. The interests of the consumer have, of course, to be taken into account, and I have no doubt that when the necessity arises measures can be devised for protecting them. In this connection it must be remembered that there can be no question of exploitation of the consumer so long as he is asked to pay nothing more than the economic price of the article he buys. If the dumping of cheap foreign goods gives the consumer an advantage, it is purely temporary, and in the long run it does neither him nor the country any good, that he should have for a time made available to him cheap foreign goods sold at a price below the cost of production of the indigenous article.

The question then arises how the industry in India is to be safeguarded and enabled to satisfy the full requirements of the country. At the interview I had with you when you were last in Bombay, I gathered the impression that, provided a satisfactory political settlement was achieved, you would favour the imposition of a special duty against Japan. And if I understand the purport of your recent announcement correctly, your attitude might be that, while you would not have a yard of Lancashire or any other foreign cloth in this country if you could help it, you would not in certain circumstances mind Lancashire

deriving some advantage over Japan owing to the special measures which it might be necessary to take to meet Japanese competition. Will you kindly let me know if I have understood your position correctly ? "

My position is clear.

1. If I had my way, India would be clothed in khadi to the exclusion of all other cloth, even made in indigenous mills.

2. Whilst India is unwilling (there is no question of inability) to manufacture all the khadi she needs, I should allow indigenous mill cloth to supplement it.

3. There is picketing of foreign cloth because foreign cloth competes with both khadi and Indian mill cloth. It is irrelevant whether the competition is fair or unfair in the sense whether the cloth manufactured in the respective countries is fairly produced and brought here or not.

4. If there was no competition, and if it became clear that some foreign cloth had to come to India, and if England was in partnership with India freed, I would give preference to England over all other countries. But my belief is that when India becomes free she will manufacture within a short time enough khadi for her wants, supplementing it during the transition with indigenous mill cloth.

Young India, 30-7-1931

SWADESHI GOODS

The Working Committee has now given us a workable definition of Swadeshi goods. It is as follows:

> "Swadeshi goods, not being cloth or yarn, are those goods which are wholly made in India out of raw material whether indigenous or imported by a manufacturer with not less than 75 per cent Indian-owned share capital, provided that no goods will be considered Swadeshi the manufacture of which is controlled by foreigners.
>
> Note: For the purposes of this definition the word 'controlled' refers to Boards of Directors and/or Managing Agents.
>
> It shall be open to the Working Committee to publish a list from time to time of goods classed as Swadeshi though they may not fully comply with the foregoing definition."

The definition is open to the objection that it allows of raw materials being imported. This latitude was deliberately kept. There is no harm in importing raw material when it cannot be found in India. It is the skill that has been banished from the land or left undeveloped owing to the absence of the Swadeshi spirit. A country remains poor in wealth, both material and intellectual, if it does not develop its handicrafts and its industries and lives a lazy parasitic life by importing all the manufactured articles from outside. There was a time when we manufactured almost all we wanted. The process is now reversed, and we are dependent upon the outside world for most manufactured goods. The past year brought forth a remarkable awakening of the Swadeshi spirit. It has therefore become necessary to define Swadeshi goods. But in

giving a definition care had to be taken not to make the definition so narrow as to make manufacture all but impossible or so wide as to become farcical and Swadeshi only in name. We do not want to follow the frog-in-the-well policy nor, in seeming to be international, lose our roots. We cannot be international, if we lose our individuality, i. e. nationality.

The reader will also note that cloth or yarn, whether cotton, woollen or silken, is excluded from the definition. One reason is that it is sufficiently known what is Swadeshi cloth. But the second and for me the most important is that Swadeshi cloth for Congressmen means only and exclusively hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. Indigenous mill cloth is meant for those whom the Congress message cannot or does not reach.

It will also be noticed that, since at the present stage of our evolution we have to be satisfied about many things being not wholly Swadeshi, the Working Committee has reserved the right to issue a list from time to time of such articles as may not wholly satisfy the definition and yet to exclude them would be injurious to the best interest of the country.

Young India, 20-8-1931

IN LANCASHIRE

Joy Not Unmixed

But the joy of meeting these friends was not unmixed. After having given all of them a patient hearing it was no happiness to Gandhiji to tell them that he could bring them very little comfort. They had come with great expectations perhaps, but Gandhiji had, with great sorrow, to make it clear to them that he was called to undertake a task to which he and his country were unequal: "My nationalism is not so narrow that I should not feel for your distress or gloat over it. I do not want my country's happiness at the sacrifice of any other country's happiness. But whilst I see that you are hard hit, I am afraid your distress is not largely due to India. Conditions have been bad for some years, and the boycott came only as the last straw." He said at Springvale Garden Village: "There is not boycott of British cloth, as distinguished from other foreign cloth, since the 5th March when the truce was signed. As a nation we are pledged to boycott all foreign cloth, but in case of an honourable settlement between England and India, i. e. in case of a permanent peace, I should not hesitate to give preference to Lancashire cloth to all other foreign cloth, to the extent that we may need to supplement our cloth, and on agreed terms. But how much relief that can give you, I do not know. You must recognise that all the markets of the world are now not open to you. What you have done, all other nations are doing today. Even Indian mills would be producing more and more cloth every day. You surely will not want me to restrict Indian enterprise for the sake of Lancashire."

"I am pained," he said elsewhere, "at the unemployment here. But here is no starvation or semi-starvation. In India we have both. If you went to the villages of India, you would find utter despair in the eyes of the villagers, you would find half-starved skeletons, living corpses. If India could revive them by putting life and food into them in the shape of work, India would help the world. Today India is a curse. There is a party in my country which would sooner see an end to the lives of these half-starved millions in order that the rest may live. I thought of a humane method, and that was to give them work with which they were familiar, which they could do in their cottages, which required no great investment in implements, and of which the product could be easily sold. This is a task which is worthy of the attention even of Lancashire."

Lancashire's Case and Gandhiji's Reply

"But look at these mills, which were busy hives only the other day, lying absolutely idle. In Blackburn, Darwen, Great Harwood, Accrington over a hundred mills have had to close down. In the Great Harwood area nothing less than 17,436 looms are idle. We took special training at colleges in weaving Indian textiles, we are weaving exclusively dhotis for India, and why should we not make them today and bring about better relations between India and England?" said some of the employers. "We helped India during the famine of 1897-99. We collected money for the poor and sent it to them. We have always stood for a liberal policy. Why should the boycott be directed against us?" said some of the working people. Some of them placed their individual grievances before Gandhiji. The most pathetic of them all was the following: "I am a cotton operative. I have been a weaver for 40 years, and now I am without work. It is not want or distress that worries me. My

estimate of myself is gone. I have fallen in my own estimate inasmuch as I am a recipient of unemployment dole. I do not think I am going to finish my life with any self-respect."

At Hayes farm, which is a rest house in Yorkshire for the employers, and the prosperous among the employees who might care to spend a week-end there, several deputations of unemployed people waited upon Gandhiji with very nearly the same tale, and the brethren in the rest house had a special service where they prayed for the will of God to prevail. It was impossible for Gandhiji to disguise his feelings. "I would be untrue to you, I would be a false friend, if I were not frank with you," said Gandhiji, and poured out his heart before them for three-quarters of an hour — describing how economics and ethics and politics were in his life inextricably mixed up, how he had raised the banner of truth above everything else, how he had refrained from wedding himself to the results, how he was led to place the spinning wheel before the country, and how the world conditions had driven them to the present state of things. "I strove with Lord Irwin last March for the liberty to boycott liquor and foreign cloth. He suggested that I might give up this boycott for three months as a gesture and then resume it. I said I could not give it up for three minutes. You had three million unemployed, but we have nearly three hundred million unemployed for half the year. Your average unemployment dole is 70 shillings. Our average income is 7 shillings and 6 pence a month. That operative was right in saying that he was falling in his own estimation. I do believe it is a debasing thing for a human being to remain idle and to live on doles. Whilst conducting a strike I would not brook the strikers remaining idle for a single day, and got them to break the stones or carry sand and work in public streets, asking my own co-workers to join them in that work.

Imagine, therefore, what a calamity it must be to have 300 million unemployed, several millions becoming degraded every day for want of employment, devoid of self-respect, devoid of faith in God. I dare not take before them the message of God. I may as well place before the dog over there the message of God as before those hungry millions who have no lustre in their eyes and whose only God is their bread. I can take before them a message of God only by taking the message of sacred work before them. It is good enough to talk of God whilst we are sitting here after a nice breakfast and looking forward to a nicer luncheon; but how am I to talk of God to the millions who have to go without two meals a day? To them God can only appear as bread and butter. Well, the peasants of India were getting their bread from their soil. I offered them the spinning wheel in order that they may get butter; and if I appear today before the British public in my loin cloth, it is because I have come as the sole representative of those half-starved, half-naked, dumb millions. We have prayed that we may bask in the presence of God's sunshine. I tell you it is impossible to do so whilst millions are knocking at your door. Even in your misery you are comparatively happy. I do not grudge that happiness. I wish well to you, but do not think of prospering on the tombs of the poor millions of India. I do not want for India an isolated life at all, but I do not want to depend on any country for my food and clothing. Whilst we may devise means for tiding over the present crisis, I must tell you that you should cherish no hope of reviving the old Lancashire trade. It is impossible. I cannot religiously help in the process. Supposing I have suddenly stopped breathing and I am helped by artificial respiration for a while and begin to breathe again, must I for ever depend on artificial respiration and refuse to use my own lungs again? No, it would be suicidal. I must

try to strengthen my own lungs and live on my own resources. You must pray to God that India may strengthen her lungs. Do not attribute your misery to India. Think of the world forces that are powerfully working against you. See things in the dry light of reason."

Before the Mayor of Darwen he said: "Pray tell me what I am to do with a fifth of the human race living on the verge of starvation and devoid of all sense of self-respect. It should occupy the attention even of unemployed Lancashire. You have told us of the help Lancashire gave us during the famine of 1899-1900. What return can we render but the blessings of the poor? I have come to give fair trade. But if I go without giving it, it will not be through any fault of mine. There is no bitterness in me. I claim fellowship with the lowest of animals. Why not then with Englishmen with whom we have been bound, for good or ill, for over a century and amongst whom I claim some of my dearest friends? You will find me an easy proposition, but if you will repel my advances, I shall go away, not in bitterness, but with a sense that I was not pure enough to find a lodgement in your hearts."

Wholly Economic

The talk with the employers at Edgeworth was most friendly and carried on in a most dispassionate spirit. It is there that Gandhiji forcibly brought out the economic nature of the foreign cloth boycott.

Q. Is it possible, Mr. Gandhi, to divorce boycott for a political purpose from boycott for an economic purpose?

A. When the sole object was that of punishing Britain — as in 1930, when people preferred articles of American or German make to those of British make — it was avowedly of a political purpose. Even British machinery was then boycotted. But now the original

economic boycott remains. You may call it boycott, but it is an entirely educative effort or a self-purificatory endeavour. It is an appeal to go back to our former calling, shake off idleness, and earn a living, however poor, not on doles but in the sweat of their brow.

Q. But the political aspect would be there inasmuch as you would give preference to your mills over all other foreign articles.

A. The boycott was not undertaken on behalf of the mills. In fact it was the first constructive effort begun with our quarrel with the local mill-owners, and though the millionaires are supporting our movement, they are not controlling our policy but we are trying to influence them. And when we go out to the villages we do not ask them to wear Indian mill cloth, we ask them to wear khadi or to make their own khadi, and every Congressman is expected to wear khadi.

Q. Whatever you may say, Mr. Gandhi, you are in for more political power, which you are bound to get, and as soon as you get it, these mill-owners, in the unscrupulousness of their greed, will build huge tariff walls and be a graver danger to your villages than even the Lancashire cotton trade.

A. If I am still living then, and if such a catastrophe happens, I make bold to say that the mills will be destroyed in the process. And with real political power universal adult suffrage will come, and it will be impossible for the monied classes to crush the interests of poor villagers.

Q. Don't you think people themselves will go back to mill cloth as the Americans are going back to liquor?

A. No. In America prohibition was a mighty weapon used by a powerful nation against an unwilling people. People were accustomed to drinking. Drink was fashionable. In India mill cloth was never a fashion, whereas khadi has become a fashion and a

passport to respectable society. And, whatever happens, I shall fight on for the economic salvation of my people, and that, you will agree, is worth living for and dying for.

Q. It will be an unequal fight. The rapacity of economic competition will carry everything before it.

A. God, you say, has suffered defeat at the hands of Mammon and will continue to do so. Well, He will not suffer defeat in India.

Mr. Grey, the Chairman of the Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers' Association, who carried on a large part of this interesting conversation, agreed that the distress was more felt because they were thinking of a most concentrated area. Whereas, he said, in this area of Blackburn 50 per cent of unemployment was due to India, in his own area, Burnley, only 15 per cent was due to India. He also agreed that many of the mills had been closed down before the boycott of British goods was declared by the Congress and that a large part of the distress was due to world conditions, and he also agreed that even a complete lifting of the boycott was not going to relieve the distress considerably.

Goodwill

The unemployed working men, who saw Gandhiji, were in no bitter mood. On the contrary they asked questions about the agricultural conditions in India, why the agriculturist had no work for six months in the year, why the standard of living was so poor, and so on and so forth. The question with them, as they frankly put it, was not of starvation but of lowered standard of living; where they could spend a shilling they have to be satisfied with six pence, and whilst many of them can save nothing at all, many had to live on their savings. The rate of their present dole is sh. 17/- male, 15/- female (9/- for wife if not a worker) and 2/- for each child per week. "This,"

said Gandhiji, " is a fortune, and for you, a resourceful race, it should not be difficult to hit upon other industries and occupations. For my starving crores I have no other occupation. If some of you experts can find it, I am prepared to substitute it for the spinning wheel. In the meanwhile I can hold out to you no more hope than this that an independent India, as an equal partner of Great Britain, will give preference to Lancashire cloth, which India needs and which Lancashire alone can produce, over all foreign cloth."

Poor comfort this, but as they left I found no bitterness in them. One of them said: "Something good cannot but come out of this. And if nothing good, no evil can come out, and goodwill certainly is the immediate result. We understand each other now. It is a privilege to have seen Mr. Gandhi, a mighty force thrown up by the awakening East." Another said: "I am one of the unemployed, but if I were in India, I would say the same thing that Mr. Gandhi is saying."*

Young India, 15-10-1931

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* From one of the 'London Letters' by M. D.

INDUSTRIALISM

"What is your view about the industrialization of India?"

"Industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors. It is because these factors are getting less and less every day for England that its number of unemployed is mounting up daily. The Indian boycott was but a flea-bite. And if that is the state of England, a vast country like India cannot expect to benefit by industrialization. In fact India when it begins to exploit other nations—as it must, if it becomes industrialized—will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrializing India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation, viz. that we can find work for our 300 millions unemployed, but England can find none for its three millions and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England? The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France and Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, even so there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources natural, mineral and human. The mighty English look quite pigmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages after all, you will say. They are certainly noble, but no savages, and in the course of a few years the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?"*

Young India, 12-11-1931

* From one of the 'London Letters' by M. D.

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NO OTHER OR BETTER MESSAGE

Foreign Cloth Boycott

You will observe that one boycott has been retained. Out of regard for the sentiment of an English friend the word 'Boycott' has been changed in the agreement into 'refusal to use foreign cloth'. There is no doubt a bad odour about the word 'Boycott'. It usually implies hatred. So far as I am concerned, I have not intended the word to bear any such meaning. The boycott has reference not to British but to foreign cloth. That boycott is not merely a right but a duty. It is as much a duty as boycott of foreign waters would be if they were imported to substitute the waters of the Indian rivers. This, however, is a digression.

What I wanted to say was that the agreement saves and emphasizes the boycott of foreign cloth. For me it is an effective substitute for violent methods. Just as certain acts such as abuse, irritating conduct, lying. causing hurt, and murder are symbols of violence, similarly courtesy, inoffensive conduct, truthfulness etc. are symbols of non-violence. And so to me is boycott of foreign cloth a symbol of non-violence. Revolutionary crime is intended to exert pressure. But it is the insane pressure of anger and ill-will. I contend that non-violent acts exert pressure far more effective than violent acts, for that pressure comes from goodwill and gentleness. Boycott of foreign cloth exerts such pressure. We import the largest amount of foreign cloth from Lancashire. It is also by far the largest of all our imports, sugar being next. Britain's chief interest centres round the Lancashire trade with India. It is the one thing more than any

other that has ruined the Indian peasant and imposed partial idleness upon him by depriving him of the one supplementary occupation he had. Boycott of foreign cloth is, therefore, a necessity if he is to live. The plan, therefore, is not merely to induce the peasant to refuse to buy the cheap and nice-looking foreign fabric but also by teaching him to utilize his spare hours in carding and spinning cotton and getting it woven by the village weavers to dress himself in khaddar so woven and thus to save him the cost of buying foreign and for that matter even Indian mill-made cloth. Thus boycott of foreign cloth by means of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, i. e. khaddar, not only saves the peasant's money, but it enables us workers to render social service of a first class order. It brings us into direct touch with the villagers. It enables us to give them real political education and teach them to become self-sustained and self-reliant. Organization of khaddar is thus infinitely better than co-operative societies or any other form of village organization. It is fraught with the highest political consequence, because it removes the greatest immoral temptation from Britain's way. I call the Lancashire trade immoral, because it was raised and is sustained on the ruin of millions of India's peasants. And as one immorality leads to another, the many proved immoral acts of Britain are traceable to this one immoral traffic. If, therefore, this one great temptation is removed from Britain's path by India's voluntary effort, it would be good for India, good for Britain, and, as Britain is today the predominent world power, good even for humanity.

I do not endorse the proposition that supply follows demand. On the contrary, demand is often artificially created by unscrupulous vendors. And if a nation is bound, as I hold it is, like individuals to comply with a code of moral conduct, then it must consider the welfare of those whose wants it seeks to supply. It is

wrong and immoral for a nation to supply, for instance, intoxicating liquor to those who are addicted to drink. What is true of intoxicants is true of grain or cloth, if the discontinuance of their cultivation or manufacture in the country to which foreign grain or cloth are exported results in enforced idleness or penury. These latter hurt a man's soul and body just as much as intoxication. Depression is but excitement upside down and hence equally disastrous in its results and often more so because we have not yet learnt to regard as immoral or sinful the depression of idleness or penury.

Britain's Duty

It is then, I hold, the duty of Great Britain to regulate her exports with due regard to the welfare of India, as it is India's to regulate her imports with due regard to her own welfare. That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce. And I must confess that my ambition is nothing less than to see international relations placed on a moral basis through India's efforts. I do not despair of cultivation of limited mass non-violence. I refuse to believe that the tendency of human nature is always downward.

The fruition of the boycott of foreign cloth through hand-spinning and khaddar is calculated not only to bring about a political result of the first magnitude, it is calculated also to make the poorest of India, whether men or women, conscious of their strength and make them partakers in the struggle for India's freedom.

Foreign *versus* British

It is hardly necessary now to demonstrate the futility, not to say the violent nature, of boycott of British cloth or better still British goods as so many

patriots have suggested. I am considering the boycott purely from the point of view of India's good. All British goods do not harm us. Some goods such as English books we need for our intellectual or spiritual benefit. As regards cloth, it is not merely British cloth that harms us, but all foreign cloth, and for that matter to a lesser extent even mill-made cloth injures us. Boycott brought about anyhow of British cloth cannot yield the same results as such boycott brought about by hand-spinning and khaddar. This necessitates exclusion at least of all foreign cloth. The exclusion is not intended as a punishment. It is a necessity of national existence.

Objections Considered

But, say the critics, the spinning wheel has not taken, it is not exciting enough, it is an occupation only for women, it means a return to the middle ages, it is a vain effort against the majestic march of scientific knowledge for which machinery stands. In my humble opinion India's need is not excitement but solid work. For the millions solid work itself is excitement and tonic at the same time. The fact is that we have not given the spinning wheel enough trial. I am sorry to have to say that many of us have not given it a serious thought. Even the members of the All India Congress Committee have failed to carry out the series of resolutions on hand-spinning which they themselves have passed from time to time. The majority of us have simply not believed in it. In the circumstances it is hardly just to say that spinning has failed for want of excitement about it. To say that it is merely an old woman's occupation is to ignore facts. Spinning mills are a multiplication of spinning wheels. They are managed by men. It is time that we got out of this superstition that some occupations are beneath the dignity of men. Under normal conditions no doubt spinning will be the occupation of the gentle sex. But the State of the

future will always have to keep some men at the spinning wheel so as to make improvements in it within the limitations which as a cottage industry it must have. I must inform you that the progress the mechanism of the wheel has made would have been impossible, if some of us men had not worked at it and had not thought about it day and night.

Machinery

I wish, too, you would dismiss from your minds the views attributed to me about machinery. In the first instance, I am no more trying to present for national acceptance all my views on machinery than I am presenting the whole of my belief in non-violence. The spinning wheel is itself an exquisite piece of machinery. My head daily bows in reverence to its unknown inventor. What I do resent is the wanton and wicked destruction of the one cottage industry of India that kept the wolf from the doors of thousands of homes scattered over a surface 1900 miles long and 1500 miles broad.

Spinning Franchise

You will not now wonder at my passion for the spinning wheel, nor will you wonder why I have ventured to present it for introduction in the franchise, and why Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu Das have accepted it on behalf of the Swaraj Party. If I had my way, there would be no one on the Congress register who is unwilling to spin or who would not wear khaddar on all occasions. I am, however, thankful for what the Swaraj Party has accepted. The modification is a concession to weakness or want of faith. But it must serve as a spur to greater effort on the part of those who have full faith in the wheel and khaddar.

No Other Message

I have thus dilated upon the spinning wheel because I have no better or other message for the nation. I know no other effective method for the attainment of

Swaraj, if it is to be by 'peaceful and legitimate means'. As I have already remarked it is the only substitute for violence that can be accepted by the whole nation. I swear by civil disobedience. But civil disobedience for the attainment of Swaraj is an impossibility unless and until we have attained the power of achieving boycott of foreign cloth. You will now easily perceive why I should be a useless guide for the Congress if my views about the spinning wheel are not acceptable to you. Indeed you would be justified in regarding me, as some friends do, as a hindrance to national progress, if you consider me to be wrong in my exposition of the doctrine underlying the spinning wheel. If it does not appeal to your heads as well as your hearts, you will be wanting in your duty in not rejecting my lead. Let it no longer be said, as Lord Willingdon very properly once said of us, that we had not the strength and courage to say 'No'. Indeed your rejection of my proposal, if you do not believe in it, will be a step towards Swaraj.*

Young India, 26-12-1924

* From the presidential address delivered at the Belgaum Congress.

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KHADI AND HARIJANS

Very few people have any notion of what khadi means to Harijans. Simple weaving is almost an exclusive speciality of Harijans, and even though mill spinning and weaving have deprived many Harijans of a source of livelihood, thousands of them are still dependent upon weaving. But a friend argues: 'What is the use of keeping alive a perishing industry? Why not give them instead an industry that may be growing? Surely, you do not intend to confine them to worn-out occupations even when you are devising all manner of means for their uplift otherwise.' Indeed I have no desire to confine Harijans, or for that matter anybody, to spinning and weaving or to any one occupation, if they can be more profitably employed in any other; only I do not take the gloomy view of hand-spinning and weaving which the objector takes. I personally believe that hand-ginning, hand-carding, hand-spinning and hand-weaving have a brilliant future at least in India. If the millions are to live with any degree of comfort, the mills must seek main custom outside India. The villagers must be induced to supplement their scanty resources by hand-spinning, hand-weaving, etc. Assuming that millions of villagers could be better employed, for the indigenous mills to supply all the needs of the nation means long delay -- several generations — and then, too, it must mean the need of big capital and dependence for machinery and technical skill upon foreign countries. In the abstract, whilst there may be nothing wrong in depending upon foreign machinery and foreign skill, in practice, it cannot but be a terrible handicap upon the mill industry. So long as this industry has got to depend

upon external help, it would be untrue to call it an indigenous industry.

On the other hand, khadi, as a village industry, requires very little capital. The implements can all be manufactured in the villages themselves, and there is no lack of indigenous technical skill. The only thing necessary is to change the mentality of the people. In spite, therefore, of the most skilful arguments to the contrary, and of imposing statistics with regard to the output of mills, I remain confirmed in my opinion that khadi in India has a very big future. What we may not do voluntarily and out of conviction, we shall be obliged to do through force of circumstances. India has to live, that is, her millions have to live. There is no difference of opinion as to the fact that they are not living today. They are merely existing. There is no other country in the world where so many millions of people have only partial employment and where, in spite of the civilization being predominantly rural, the holdings are barely two acres per head. To manufacture the whole of her cloth requirements through steam or electricity, or any other than the human power behind the wheel, is still further to deepen the unemployment of the population. An industrialized India must, therefore, mean utter extinction of many millions, including, naturally, Harijans, who occupy, to our utter shame, the lowest strata of society.

It is said that through highly industrialized processes every American owns what is equivalent to 36 slaves. If we use America as our model, and if we allowed only 30 slaves to every Indian instead of 36, out of our 31 crores of human beings 30 crores must perform *hari-kari* or be killed off. I know that some enthusiastic patriots will not only not mind such a process, but they will welcome it. They will say that it is better to have one crore of happy, contented, prosperous Indians, armed to the teeth, than to have 30 crores

of unarmed creatures who can hardly walk. I have no answer to that philosophy, because, being saturated with the Harijan mentality, I can only think in terms of the millions of villagers and can only make my happiness dependent upon that of the poorest amongst them, and want to live only if they can live. My very simple mind cannot go beyond the little spindle of the little wheel which I can carry about with me from place to place and which I can manufacture without difficulty. In this connection a friend sends me the following paragraph which is going round the press:

> "To relieve unemployment in certain industries the Nazis have ordered the stoppage of the use of machines which were displacing human labour. Commenting on this interdiction *The Manchester Guardian* remarks: 'There has been a great deal of discussion about the effects of machinery in aggravating the unemployment crisis, but it has been left to the Nazis to do the logical thing and stop using it. It is only a little while since the world was asked to admire the miraculous triumph of labour-saving rationalization in Germany. Now the Government is bent on fighting the machine, either by prohibiting its use or by compelling employers to work shorter hours and employ more men. Mr. Gandhi's efforts to replace the spinning frame by the hand-wheel and the mechanical loom by the hand-loom are being parallelled closely in the German cigar and glass industries.'"

The Guardian concludes its remarks by observing that, if Germany's 'ethics become mediæval, there is no reason why her economics should not become mediæval also.' Replying to these comments, a correspondent writes in *The Guardian*:

> 'Hitler, Gandhi and others who in different ways are endeavouring to slow production to a point at which all goods are consumed may be reverting to mediæval methods, but handicrafts are neither

> retrograde nor barbaric. They are taught in every progressive elementary and secondary school.... Unless unemployment is abolished within a reasonable time, even by means that appear novel and unorthodox, then the machinery age will disappear in revolutions and wars that will destroy us all. So long as machinery promotes the happiness and the prosperity of the masses as well as the classes it is a beneficent agent. But when it leads to the unemployment and starvation of millions, as is happening in the highly industrialized countries of the West, it becomes a curse. Machinery exists for man, and not *vice versa*, and must be made subservient to the well-being of the people and should not be allowed to become their master.'

That the village industries in Germany are being revived at the point of the sword is not relevant here. What is relevant is that a country, which has shown the highest technical skill and is amongst the most advanced in the matter of industrialization, is trying to go back to village industries for solving the problem of her terrible unemployment.

Harijan, 27-10-1933

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KHADI AND HARIJANS

Those who, apart from the whole programme of anti-untouchability, are interested in the economic betterment of Harijans should know that khadi gives employment to thousands of Harijan men, women and children who otherwise had no employment. It entirely supports some families and supplements the slender resources of many more and keeps the wolf from the door. Its capacity to be the only universal source of employment to the starving millions is not now seriously questioned. It is this poor man's stay which is being undermined by unscrupulous methods. I learnt in Madura that some dealers in cloth were palming off khadi cloth woven from mill-spun yarn as hand-spun and hand-woven. I was shown specimens which were exact copies of special khadi varieties. Lovers of khadi, and Harijan servants who believe in the potency of khadi to serve Harijans, are requested not to buy khadi which does not bear the hall-mark of the All India Spinners' Association. I heard also that mill cloth too, both foreign and indigenous, is largely sold in the market as khadi. And to fill my cup of woe, I am being represented as having changed my views on khadi and having put indigenous mill cloth on a par with khadi. This is a misrepresentation of my view of khadi. My faith in khadi is, if possible, stronger than ever from the moral, economic and national (in its widest sense) standpoint; there is no comparison between khadi and mill cloth, even indigenous. Exploitation of the poor through mill cloth or mill yarn is an impossibility in the case of khadi. Exploitation of the poor through mill cloth and mill yarn is inevitable in some shape or form, be it ever so mild. The use

of genuine khadi constitutes some (be it ever so small) automatic return to the poor for their continuous exploitation by the comparatively rich and can in the aggregate become a mighty return, though never adequate, to the masses living in the villages. None of these functions can ever be performed by mill cloth even if every mill was nationalized. In the mill industry, even if it was conducted purely as a trust for the nation and ably managed, there could never be automatic distribution and there must be displacement of a vast amount of labour. In khadi, with the spinning wheel in every cottage, there can be no displacement of labour and there is always automatic distribution of the product of labour. Hence for me there can be no comparison between khadi and mill cloth, there can be no juxtaposition. For, the two are not of the same kind. Khadi may never reach the finish of the mill cloth, nor its variety, nor yet its cheapness in terms of the market. The measurement for each is different. Khadi represents human values; mill cloth represents mere metallic value. A yard of khadi is cheap for me at 4 annas per yard. Mill cloth of the same count and texture is too dear for me at 2 annas per yard. My plea, therefore, is for discrimination and avoidance of confusion of thought. Let each stand on its own platform. Let mill managers not grudge khadi the place it occupies. It ill becomes them to produce cloth that looks like khadi and thus cheat the buyers into the belief that it is khadi.

Harijan, 9-2-1934

SPINNING AND WEAVING FOR HARIJANS

During my peregrinations I have observed that spinning and weaving are among the industries that are supporting thousands of Harijans and, if properly organized, can support many more. Indeed, in some places, there are to be found weavers who are classed as untouchables on account of their occupation. They are mostly weavers of coarsest khadi without any pattern. This class was fast dying out when khadi came to the rescue and there was created a demand for their coarse manufacture. It was then discovered that there were numerous Harijan families that even subsisted on spinning. Thus khadi is doubly the poor man's staff of life. It helps the poorest, including the Harijans, who are the most helpless among the poorest. They are so because many occupations which are available to the others are not available to the Harijans.

Apart from its great value from the Harijan standpoint, I have not omitted, to the extent I have been able during the Harijan tour, to study the whole problem of khadi. And I have found that the time has come for khadi workers to emphasize more than ever before the necessity of greater concentration on the observance of the laws of khadi economics. Some of them are essentially different from those that govern the general economics. Thus, as a rule, articles manufactured in one place are sent or attempted to be sent to all parts of the world. Those who manufacture the articles need not use them at all. Not so with khadi. Its peculiarity is that it has to be used where it is produced and preferably by the spinners and weavers themselves. Thus the demand for khadi when thus used is automatically assured. No doubt this ideal will never be reached. But the worth of khadi will always be measured by the extent to which the ideal is reached. Khadi is a cottage industry in

this special sense in which no other industry is or can be, except agriculture in a restricted sense, if agriculture may be regarded as an industry. Therefore it is necessary to educate the spinners and weavers to appreciate the simple economics of khadi. Where cloth is spun and woven by the spinners and weavers for their own use, it is naturally cheapest for them.

It follows that we must not seek to send khadi for sale far away from its place of manufacture. The surplus khadi should be sold in the village where it is manufactured. If there is still a surplus, it should be sold in the district of its manufacture. Special varieties will no doubt continue to be manufactured by those families which have woven artistic patterns from time immemorial. That sort of khadi will live, no matter what befalls the villagers' khadi, which is meant as a perennial source of labour and income for them.

The foregoing does not mean a revolution in the immediate administration of the A. I. S. A. Its depots will go on as usual. But it does mean a revolution in the thought world. The best mind of khadi workers will concentrate itself upon the village khadi, upon its style and durability, to suit the taste of the villagers. There will thus have to be a better and more real bond between ginners, carders, spinners and weavers on the one hand, and the khadi workers on the other. There will be no feverish anxiety to increase the sales in towns. These sales will be regulated according to the demand of town-dwellers and the propaganda conducted by khadi lovers who will not or cannot directly reach the villagers but who will not be satisfied till they have sold some khadi on behalf of the poor spinners and weavers. Let this be borne in mind that khadi can be permanent only when it has obtained a permanent footing as village wear.

Harijan, 27-4-1934

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A CAREFUL SPINNER

A Harijan sevak, who is working in a Harijan school and trying to introduce hand-spinning amongst his pupils and their parents, in addition to many other things writes:

> "During the national week I spun more industriously than hitherto and much more carefully. My speed was 300 yards per hour on an average. Out of 40 tolas of cotton I obtained 37 tolas of yarn of 16 counts. The output was 9,700 rounds — a round is equal to 4 feet. In cleaning cotton and carding it, I lost 2½ tolas, and another half tola was lost in spinning. I have preserved all the waste. This I propose to utilise for filling pillows and the like. I have seen many spinners whose waste sometimes amounts to as much as the wages obtained from spinning for the amount of cotton on which the waste has been made. You should remember that I spin only during leisure hours. I shall have spun for myself much more khadi than I need for personal use. I propose to sell the surplus and apply the proceeds towards the expenses of conducting the Harijan school under my charge. My yarn is considered to be so strong and good that the weavers prefer my yarn to any other."

I know this spinner. He has become what he is by his sincerity and application. He was no better than the average spinner. But today very few volunteer spinners would be able to show the record that this Harijan sevak has been able to show. Wandering through the villages of Utkal, speaking to the people and coming in closest touch with them, I have a daily demonstration of enormous possibilities

of hand-spinning. The idleness that has crept over the poor villagers is a first class tragedy. I see hundreds, and often thousands, hovering round me all day long doing absolutely nothing. Those who hover round me are not in any shape or form well-to-do. Their food is of the most meagre kind. They hardly get milk or ghee. The food consists chiefly of boiled rice, dal and oil. The people appear to me to be without ambition and without hope, and yet they show in their own lives a remarkable culture which you cannot help noticing. But all that culture will presently be of no avail to them, if they cannot be induced to learn the art of profitably utilizing every idle hour. And I come irresistibly to the conclusion that there is nothing but the spinning wheel to present to the millions for their acceptance and use during idle hours. Surely any industry is remunerative which is designed to give occupation to millions of people.

Harijan, 8-6-1934

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KHADI — A NEW ORIENTATION

[A deputation of prominent khadi workers from Andhra, including Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Shri Sitaram Shastry and Shri Narayanaraju, met Gandhiji some time back to discuss with him future lines of development of khadi work in Andhradesh. The conversation covered a wide range of questions relating to the science and economics of khadi organization, such as introduction, at the present stage, of the democratic principle in khadi organization, elimination of the commercial element from the production of khadi, etc. The following is a gist of Gandhiji's remarks on some of the questions that were discussed. P.]

No Room for Democracy

Khaddar in a sense is purely an economic proposition. A khaddar organization must be a business concern before everything else. The democratic principle, therefore, cannot apply to it. Democracy necessarily means a conflict of will and ideas, involving sometimes a war to the knife between these different ideas. There can be no room for such conflict within a business organization. Imagine parties, groups and the like in a business concern. It must break to pieces under their weight. But a khadi organization is more than a business concern. It is a philanthropic institution designed to serve demos. Such an institution cannot be governed by popular fancy. There is no room in it for personal ambition.

Diametrically Opposite

In reorganizing your khadi production you should not forget that the science of khadi in some respects works on lines diametrically opposite to that of ordinary

business. You know how Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations*, after laying down certain principles according to which economic phenomena are governed, went on to describe certain other things which constituted the 'disturbing factor' and prevented economic laws from having free play. Chief among these was the 'human element'. Now it is this 'human element' on which the entire economics of khadi rests; and human selfishness, Adam Smith's pure economic motive, constitutes the 'disturbing factor' that has got to be overcome. What applies to the production of mill cloth, therefore, does not apply to khadi. Debasing of quality, adulteration, pandering to the baser tastes of humanity, are current staple in commercialized production; they have no place in khadi, nor has the principle of highest profit and lowest wages any place in khadi. On the contrary there is no such thing as pure profit in khadi. And there should be no loss. Loss there is, because we, the workers, are still incompetent novices. In khadi the prices realized return to the prime producers, the spinners, the others getting no more than their hire.

Then take the question of standardization. You cannot enforce it in khadi. As Rajagopalachari once remarked, a poor ordinary spinner cannot always spin thread of a uniform quality. She is not a machine. Today she may be unwell, tomorrow her child may be ill and her mind may be distracted. If you have love for the poor spinner or her child, you will not insist on having smooth, even thread always, but be satisfied with what she can give, so long as she gives her best in the condition in which she finds herself at the moment. The sacred touch of her hand gives life and history to khadi which the machine-made yarn can never give. The art that is in the machine-made article appeals only to the eye; the art in khadi appeals first to the heart and then to the eye. I would therefore deprecate the bleaching of khadi. It adds to the cost

of production, affects the durability of cloth, and makes the detection of fraud ever so much more difficult. We must not pamper the popular fancy, but seek to cultivate a new taste. A few washes in the ordinary course will suffice to make khadi perfectly white and give it a softness which bleaching destroys. We must make everybody contribute his or her mite to reduce all unnecessary cost.

Converting the Spinner

If then we treat khadi not as an article of commerce but as one necessary for the sustenance of semi-starved millions, we must penetrate the spinner's home and induce her to wear khadi made from her own yarn. This at once reduces the cost of production and ensures automatic distribution. So far we have simply tried to manufacture khadi for the city people. From insignificant beginnings the production of khadi has grown to several lakhs per year. We have multiplied varieties. But that does not satisfy me now. Khadi was conceived with a much more ambitious object, i. e. to make our villages starvation-proof. This is impossible unless the villagers will wear khadi themselves, sending only the surplus to the cities. The singular secret of khadi lies in its saleability in the place of its production and use by the manufacturers themselves.

Overhead Charges

Our overhead charges are today much too high for me. If we concentrate attention on the central mission of khadi, they will be considerably reduced. The rules governing the reduction of the price of khadi are somewhat, if not wholly, different from those that apply to purely commercial articles produced chiefly for profit. In khadi there is a limitation to the improvement of tools. But there is no limitation to the improvement of human intelligence and honesty. If we despair of these two, we must despair of khadi. In khadi, there-

fore, we reduce cost by eliminating middlemen as far as is consistent with the smooth running of the organization, which itself will be unnecessary when khadi is self-supporting and self-acting.

The science of khadi is still in its infancy. It is a developing science. With every new discovery that I make in it, the realization comes to me all the more vividly how little I know of that science. There is no other country in the world, with the possible exception of China, that is potentially so rich as India with its inexhaustible, untapped reserves of man-power. Tap these reserves, and you at once banish poverty from this country; hand-spinning is the means by which this can be done. All that we have done so far in khadi was necessary. Without it we could not have reached the present stage. But we have yet only touched the fringe of the problem. We have now need to take another step. If, therefore, you will have autonomy for Andhra khadi, you can have it for the asking and without much trouble about the discharge of your obligations. There is nothing to prevent you from working along the lines suggested by me.

Harijan, 21-9-1934

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NEED FOR EXACTNESS

A correspondent sends a newspaper cutting containing a notice in praise of khadi. From it I take the following relevant paragraphs:

> "A rupee spent on foreign cloth means one anna and a half to Indians, while annas fourteen plus half an anna go direct into foreign trade's growth.
>
> A rupee spent on mill cloth means half the amount for the mill-owner, annas six to instruments of production, and two annas into foreigners' pockets.
>
> A rupee spent on khadi means the whole of the amount minus management expenses — one anna — to the producer alone."

The sender asks if it is true that every rupee invested in khadi means fifteen annas going to the producers and only one anna going to the salesmen. I can only answer that the ideal set before the managers in charge of the A. I. S. A. stores is that the prices should be so regulated as to show on the total sales a surplus, in order to cover expenses, of one anna for every fifteen annas worth of khadi received from the producing depot. The fifteen annas will, therefore, include several other items, e. g. freight, etc. Hence it is altogether wrong to say that of every rupee invested in khadi fifteen annas go to the producer.

After khadi leaves the weavers' hands it undergoes many processes — washing, dyeing, calendering, storing in intermediate depots, and so on. If the term 'producer' is confined to the grower, the picker, the ginner, the carder, the sliver-maker, the spinner, the bobbin-winder, the warper, the sizer and the weaver, but not the workers of the processes after weaving, the producer gets probably no more than

eight annas in the rupee. It is usual and proper to exclude the other processes, as they are not necessary for fulfilling the purpose of khadi, and may or may not have been done by villagers or workers properly so called. Washing, dyeing, etc. are often done through organized, i. e. capitalist, concerns. Now all those who contribute to the increase in the selling price of khadi do not divide the wages with the producer, in other words, do not take the bread out of the mouth of the producer, but help him to find a market for his manufacture, and this they do even when they are capitalist concerns. For, the latter do not at present work for their profit, but work, no matter from what motive, for the sake of the producer. Therefore the whole truth seems to me to be more conducive to the advertisement of khadi than the undoubted, though unconscious or ignorant, exaggeration in the notice under discussion. If I was the draftsman of the notice, I should say:

> "When you buy a rupee worth of khadi, know that the producer retains the full fruit of his labour, whereas, when you buy cloth manufactured by indigenous mills, you wholly deprive him of that beneficial labour, without providing him with a substitute. The agency that sells khadi gets nothing but the bare living expenses and is, therefore, on a par with the producer."

Thus it will be found that a critical study of the economics of khadi will show that it is a crime against semi-starved humanity for any Indian to use any cloth but khadi. Such a person takes a morsel out of the mouth of some already famishing villager. Khadi suffers, not because of any intrinsic defect; it suffers because of the ignorance of its friends and foes alike.

But it is necessary to examine the buyer's case. The advertisement is misleading from his viewpoint. Khadi will sell at half the present price if he will revise his taste, i. e. if he will buy unbleached khadi

and put all the ornamentation he likes, afterwards. He need not bother his head about it, if the cost is no consideration. But let the buyer to whom cost is a consideration know that he pays much less for unbleached and unadorned khadi than for prepared and bleached khadi. Moreover unbleached khadi lasts longer than bleached. The public should also know that during the past twelve years khadi has become much cheaper and better in texture. It has put more money into the pockets of the individual spinners by improving their tools and increasing their skill. This could not have happened, if some educated men and women had not dedicated themselves to the task of helping the semi-starved but partially employed millions. The one key industry of India which supplemented the agricultural labour would never have died, if the distorted notion of *varna* or caste had not regarded these millions almost as untouchables, beneath the notice of the self-styled higher class.

No doubt there are defects in the khadi organizations; there is not complete dedication, there is not enough critical study of every problem that demands a solution. But this is not a matter of surprise. We cannot in a moment get rid of the habits of a lifetime. We cannot all of a sudden develop the cunning of the hand. The science of khadi requires technical and mechanical skill of a high order, and demands as much concentration as is given by Sir J. C. Bose to the tiny leaves of plants in his laboratory before he wrests from them the secrets of nature held by these fellow creatures of ours.

What is then wrong with the notice complained of is not its overvaluation of khadi, but its clumsy and inadequate presentation of its case. And this comes from want of exactness due to inadequate appreciation of truth. Every one of the three paragraphs hopelessly fails when tested on that infallible anvil.

Harijan, 5-10-1934

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FOR HARIJANS' SAKE

A correspondent asks:

"Why do you insist on sacrificial spinning or self-spinning? Sacrificial spinning is spinning to give away. Self-spinning is to convert your own yarn into khadi for personal use. In either case you take away something from the mouth of the poor spinner, whom you call the lowliest paid worker. In sacrificial spinning you do serve the poor a little by assisting to lower the price of khadi. In the other it is sheer snatching the bread from a poor spinner's mouth."

This would be partly or wholly true, if spinning had become universal. But today there are some Harijans whose wage-earning capacity has been reduced 50 per cent because they, being weavers, have no hand-spun yarn to weave from. They are now trying to eke out a precarious living anyhow. These weavers would not be reduced to this sad condition, if there was sacrificial spinning going on in the country on any large scale. I have already stated in these columns how in Orissa representatives of nearly ten thousand weavers, who are almost (because unclassified) Harijans, were starving for want of work, which is the same thing as saying want of hand-spun yarn. It is useless to say that they can weave mill-spun yarn. These ten thousand weavers were doing it. But owing to Japanese competition the demand for hand-woven mill-spun cloth has considerably decreased. It is possible for khadi weavers to find a local market for their khadi, not for hand-woven cloth of mill-spun yarn. Time was when there was an abundance of hand-spun yarn because there were hundreds, if not thousands, of sacrificial spinners and there was a dearth of weavers.

Now sacrificial spinning has gone out of vogue, and there is practically a plethora of weavers who would gladly weave hand-spun yarn. Therefore, for a long time to come and so long as there is demand for khadi on the market and until spinning has become so general as to supply the demand, both sacrificial spinning and self-spinning have a definite place in the national economy. It means definite, tangible service of the poor and, among them, specially Harijans.

Moreover, such spinning, seeing that it has to be done by intelligent, educated men and women, becomes allied to art and thus admits of great development. The marvellous improvements that have taken place in the wheel and its accessories, the hand gin and the carding bow, are all due to the interest that the educated middle class men and women have taken in the movement. All the readers of *Harijan* do not know that the Secretary of the A. I. S. A. is an M. A. and the son of a distinguished and successful banker of Bombay, that its President is one of the ablest businessmen India has produced, that the controller of the khadi organization in Tamil Nad is an equally distinguished ex-lawyer, that the organizers in Bengal are an able physician and an able chemist, and in U. P. an ex-principal of a national college. These are but a few names, out of many such I can give, who have dedicated themselves to the service of Daridranarayan through khadi. But for this band of devotees the substantial progress that it has made would have been impossible, and the half crore rupees that have been distributed among, say, two hundred and fifty thousand workers, not as doles but wages for honest labour, during the years that the spinning movement has been going on, would not have been distributed. In no other or better manner could such quick work have been done than through the wheel. It has brought the lowliest in living touch with some of the most cultured men and women in the country, it has

brought a ray of light into dark hovels, it has put heart into sinking bodies, it has provided milk for thousands of milkless children, enabled villagers who would care to have automatic famine insurance, reduced idleness and reclaimed thousands from a beggar's life.

And yet the work is only in its beginning stages. The workers are too few. Those that are need more consecration and greater concentration. Many more hundreds can be absorbed by this national and humanitarian effort.

Therefore it is wrong to say that sacrificial spinning or self-spinning is harmful to the wage spinners. It is the peremptory duty of all who can to devote at least half an hour daily to spin for the sake of Harijans — the outcastes of India.

Harijan, 19-10-1934

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VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

As the author of the Congress resolution on village industries and as the sole guide of the Association that is being formed for their promotion, it is but meet that I should, as far as possible, share with the public the ideas that are uppermost in my mind regarding these industries and the moral and hygienic uplift that is intimately associated with them.

The idea of forming the Association took definite shape during the Harijan tour as early as when I entered Malabar. A casual talk with a khadi worker showed to me how necessary it was to have a body that would make an honest attempt to return to the villagers what has been cruelly and thoughtlessly snatched away from them by the city-dwellers. The hardest hit among the villagers are the Harijans. They have but a limited choice of the industries that are open to the villagers in general. Therefore, when their industries slip away from their hands, they become like the beasts of burden with whom their lot is cast.

But the villagers in general are not much better off today. Bit by bit they are being confined only to the hand-to-mouth business of scratching the earth. Few know today that agriculture in the small and irregular holdings of India is not a paying proposition. The villagers live a lifeless life. Their life is a process of slow starvation. They are burdened with debts. The moneylender lends because he can do no otherwise. He will lose all if he does not. This system of village lending baffles investigation. Our knowledge of it is superficial, in spite of elaborate inquiries.

Extinction of village industries would complete the ruin of the 700,000 villages of India.

I have seen in the daily press criticism of the proposals I have adumbrated. Advice has been given to me that I must look for salvation in the direction of using the powers of nature that the inventive brain of man has brought under subjection. The critics say that water, air, oil and electricity should be fully utilized as they are being utilized in the go-ahead West. They say that control over these hidden powers of nature enables every American to have 33 slaves.

Repeat the process in India, and I dare say that it will thirtythree times enslave every inhabitant of this land, instead of giving everyone thirtythree slaves.

Mechanization is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work, as is the case in India. I may not use a plough for digging a few square yards of a plot of land. The problem with us is not how to find leisure for the teeming millions inhabiting our villages. The problem is how to utilize their idle hours, which are equal to the working days of six months in the year. Strange as it may appear, every mill generally is a menace to the villagers. I have not worked out the figures, but I am quite safe in saying that every mill-hand does the work of at least ten labourers doing the same work in their villages. In other words, he earns more than he did in his village at the expense of ten fellow-villagers. Thus spinning and weaving mills have deprived the villagers of a substantial means of livelihood. It is no answer in reply to say that they turn out cheaper, better cloth, if they do so at all. For, if they have displaced thousands of workers, the cheapest mill cloth is dearer than the dearest khadi woven in the villages. Coal is not dear for the

coal miner who can use it there and then, nor is khadi dear for the villager who manufactures his own khadi. But if the cloth manufactured in mills displaces village hands, rice mills and flour mills not only displace thousands of poor women workers, but damage the health of the whole population in the bargain. Where people have no objection to taking flesh diet and can afford it, white flour and polished rice may do no harm, but in India. where millions can get no flesh diet even when they have no objection to eating it if they can get it, it is sinful to deprive them of nutritious and vital elements contained in whole wheat meal and unpolished rice. It is time medical men and others combined to instruct the people on the danger attendant upon the use of white flour and polished rice.

I have drawn attention to some broad glaring facts to show that the way to take work to the villagers is not through mechanization, but that it lies through revival of the industries they have hitherto followed.

Hence the function of the All India Village Industries Association must, in my opinion, be to encourage the existing industries and to revive, where it is possible and desirable, the dying or dead industries of villages according to the village methods, i. e. the villagers working in their own cottages as they have done from times immemorial. These simple methods can be considerably improved as they have been in hand-ginning, hand-carding, hand-spinning and hand-weaving.

A critic objects that the ancient plan is purely individualistic and can never bring about corporate effort. This view appears to me to be very superficial. Though articles may be manufactured by villagers in their cottages, they can be pooled together and profits divided. The villagers may work under supervision and according to plan. The raw material may be

supplied from common stock. If the will to co-operative effort is created, there is surely ample opportunity for co-operation, division of labour, saving of time, and efficiency of work. All these things are today being done by the All India Spinners' Association in over 5,000 villages.

But khadi is the sun of the village solar system. The planets are the various industries which can support khadi in return for the heat and the sustenance they derive from it. Without it the other industries cannot grow. But during my last tour I discovered that, without the revival of the other industries, khadi could not make further progress. For villages to be able to occupy their spare time profitably, the village life must be touched at all points. That is what the two Associations are expected to do.

Naturally they can have nothing to do with politics or political parties. The Congress, in my opinion, did well in making both the Associations autonomous and wholly non-political. All parties and all communities can combine to uplift the villages economically, morally and hygienically.

I know that there is a school of thought that does not regard khadi as an economic proposition at all. I hope that they will not be scared by my having mentioned khadi as the centre of village activities. I could not complete the picture of my mind without showing the interrelation between khadi and the other village industries. Those who do not see it are welcome only to concentrate their effort on the other industries. But this, too, they will be able to do through the new Association, if they appreciate the background I have endeavoured to give in this article.

Harijan, 16-11-1934

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TAKLI FOR VILLAGE WORKERS

I would request the several workers in various parts of India, who have been seeking to deliver the message of self-reliance in the matter of cloth in villages, to pay their attention to the potentialities of the takli as a means of spinning. This subject has been referred to previously in these columns some time back, and it deserves to be studied with great attention. It has been demonstrated by the inmates of the Satyagrahashram and sister institutions of Wardha that for an average spinner the productive capacity of the takli, if rightly handled, is equal to that of the charkha in every respect. For a person who is not altogether weak and who wants to spin only during leisure hours, and not with a view to remuneration, the takli is capable of completely replacing the charkha. The workers should, therefore, learn the new method of plying the takli and introduce it in the villages in preference to the charkha. For the aged and the weak the charkha would still be necessary. For, the charkha, according to the principles of mechanics, is but a takli worked by a system of levers. And as one whose muscles are not strong enough to lift up a weight by hand would need the help of a lever to do so, so one who cannot give the necessary momentum to the takli by the muscles of his palm, or cannot bear the strain of constantly raising and lowering the arm, would need the charkha.

Harijan, 22-3-1935

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SELF-SUSTAINED KHADI

Shri Shankerlal Banker has been travelling in the villages, in order to ascertain the possibilities of self-sustained khadi and of the development of other industries. Self-sustained khadi means khadi spun and woven in the first instance by the villagers for themselves and, wherever possible, out of cotton grown, ginned and carded in the respective villages. This is the true mission of khadi. The end can only be achieved by persistent human contact with the villagers. They should know the dignity and value of work apart even from its economic value. Khadi under this scheme will be manufactured to suit the village taste. Bleaching, even washing, will be avoided, for every villager will wash for himself or herself. Khadi thus produced will be cheaper than any cloth, if its durability is taken into account. The town khadi carries all the incidental charges, e. g. extra processes, stocking, transport, rents, commissions. The village khadi eliminates all these charges. The towns and cities should rely for their supplies on the surplus that may be saved after village use. Hence no khadi store should be run at a loss. A. I. S. A. stores should aim primarily at quality, never at mere show, masqerading under the name of art. Who knows what true art is? At best it is a relative term. A. I. S. A. stores should be original, should introduce village art in towns, and have confidence that they will win the day. Every piece of khadi must be strong and durable. We must not procure fineness at the cost of durability. Flimsiness will kill khadi in the end. If we cannot produce fine counts without sacrificing strength, we must own our inability. I have noticed, often enough to frighten me out of

bleaching, that bleached khadi gives way almost at the first wear. It is not suggested that this is true in every case. It is enough for my purpose to be able to say that cases of bleached khadi having proved undurable have been frequent enough to cut out customers. Let all khadi bhandars, therefore, revise their standard in so far as it may be necessary in the light of what I have said here.

And what is true of khadi is more or less true of tanning and other village industries. Workers must not, without considerable experience, interfere with the old tools, old methods and old patterns. They will be safe if they think of improvement, retaining intact the old existing background. They will find that it is true economy.

Harijan, 29-3-1935

SELF-SUSTAINED KHADI

Mysore has always appreciated the worth of hand-spinning as an aid to the farmer. It runs several such centres. The managers keep themselves in touch with the A. I. S. A. so as to keep their centres abreast of the latest researches and improvements made by the Association. The following letter from the Badanval Spinning Circle addressed to the Secretary, A. I. S. A., will be read with interest:

> "I beg to inform you that Government sanction was received to pursue a policy of developing local market and for popularizing khadi in villages. This was in accordance with the new policy which was followed to keep pace with the changes introduced by the A. I. S. A. Khadi cloth is given at cost price to bona fide weavers and spinners of this Circle. Since the month of November 1934, work was started in this direction. Till now we have sold just over Rs. 2,000 worth of khadi to about a thousand spinners. We issue cloth and recover the value thereof in weekly instalments at the time of yarn purchase. From April onwards we propose to launch the sales again. Our aim is to sell another Rs. 2,000 worth of khadi, this time mainly consisting of village saris. We find that the programme is working quite normally here."

Similar encouraging reports are coming from many quarters. I would suggest to the workers that now that the true message of khadi has been understood they should take all the steps simultaneously. A commencement has to be made with cotton growing with a fair knowledge of the conditions of cotton cultivation. It should be possible to grow cotton for

village use almost anywhere. Concentration in the most favourable soil is necessary when the ambition is to supply the world. But the reverse holds good where the ambition is to supply the village need. A corner in a field can easily grow rough cotton for the village farmer; or a village may grow cotton for itself in co-operation. If this is done, it is simple enough to see that no imported cloth can beat cloth thus produced locally, either in cost or durability. The process induces the greatest conservation of energy. Under such ideal conditions ginning, carding and spinning become pleasurable and simple. The spinning wheels, too, require overhauling. There is great waste of energy when the revolutions of the spindle are not up to the standard. With this, however, I propose to deal shortly in an article specially devoted to it.

Harijan, 20-4-1935

HOW TO DOUBLE INCOME

Though the spinning movement has been going on for the past seventeen years, and though it is giving a small but steady income to at least 120,000 women from year to year, the deplorable ignorance of the science of spinning on the part of workers keeps the income much lower than it need be. Bad cotton, badly carded and spun on a ricketty wheel without regard to the revolutions of the spindle, results in a low output. Attention to details can easily double the output and therefore the income. If cotton is carefully picked, hand-ginned and well carded, there will be an increased output and improvement in the strength and evenness of yarn. Speed, strength, evenness, and count of yarn depend perhaps most upon the number of revolutions of the spindle, i. e. the turns a spindle makes for every turn of the wheel. The calculation is easily made by drawing a vertical line on the spindle disc and turning the wheel so slowly as to enable one easily to count the turns of the spindle. A spindle should never have less than one hundred revolutions against one of the wheel. But Shri Shankerlal Banker reports that during his tour he noticed spindles performing only thirtyfive revolutions. No wonder if the output is miserably low and the yarn weak and fluffy. The way to increase the revolutions of a spindle is to decrease the diameter of the *sari* which keeps the *mal* in its place. Local workers should examine every wheel in their place and make the necessary changes in the spindle and other parts, wherever necessary. It may be in the end the takli may be found to be the best instrument of yarn production. It requires the least attention, and the new method of takli spinning gives an average speed of 200 rounds, i. e. 266 yards of yarn, and as much as 440 rounds per hour.

Harijan, 4-5-1935

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IN DEFENCE OF MACHINERY

A socialist holding a brief for machinery asked Gandhiji if the village industries movement was not meant to oust all machinery.

'Is not this wheel a machine?' was the couter-question that Gandhiji, who was just then spinning, gave in reply.

'I do not mean this machine, but I mean bigger machinery.'

'Do you mean Singer's sewing machine? That too is protected by the village industries movement, and for that matter any machinery which does not deprive masses of men of the opportunity to labour, but which helps the individual and adds to his efficiency, and which a man can handle at will without being its slave.'

'But what about the great inventions? You would have nothing to do with electricity?'

'Who said so? If we could have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity. But then the village communities or the State would own power houses, just as they have their grazing pastures. But where there is no electricity and no machinery, what are idle hands to do? Will you give them work, or would you have their owners cut them down for want of work?

'I would prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all. There is a difference between invention and invention. I should not care for the asphixiating gases capable of killing masses of men at a time. The heavy machinery for work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour has its

inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people. I can have no consideration for machinery which is meant either to enrich the few at the expense of the many, or without cause to displace the useful labour of many.

'But even you as socialist would not be in favour of an indiscriminate use of machinery. Take printing presses. They will go on. Take surgical instruments. How can one make them with one's hands? Heavy machinery would he needed for them. But there is no machinery for the cure of idleness, but this,' said Gandhiji pointing to his spinning wheel. 'I can work it whilst I am carrying on this conversation with you, and am adding a little to the wealth of the country. This machine no one can oust.'

M. D.

Harijan, 22-6-1935

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MISSION OF KHADI

The mission of khadi is not merely to supply the townspeople with fashionable khadi that will vie with the mill manufactures and thus like other industries supply a few artisans with employment, but it is to become a supplementary industry to agriculture. This mission still remains unfulfilled.

In order that it may fulfil this mission, it has to be self-sustained and its use must spread in the villages. Just as the villagers cook their own roti or rice, so must they make their own khadi for personal use. The surplus, if any, they may sell. This mission cannot be delivered unless the Khadi Service changes its complexion and the Spinners' Association its policy.

Every member of the Khadi Service should know the processes through which cotton passes before it becomes khadi.

When emphasis is put on self-sufficient khadi, commercial production will be restricted to the real wants of townspeople. It will then pass into the hands of private businessmen instead of being centralized in the hands of the Association.

In trying to commercialize khadi the Association has been hitherto dominated by the ruling prices. Thus the spinning wage has been the worst of all the wages for any form of labour. They have also varied with provinces. Therefore the prices of khadi too have varied with the provinces. It is all very well for mere profiteering bodies to countenance and even stimulate cut-throat competition, but associations whose sole purpose is to serve the pauper millions cannot afford to join such competition. There is no reason why a spinner in Bihar should get less than her sister

in Gujarat. No doubt prices vary in different provinces because the standard of living varies. But the Association cannot afford to take things as they are. It has to change them if they are unjust. There is no reason why the price of one hour's labour in spinning should be less than one in weaving. There is more skill involved in spinning than in simple weaving. Simple weaving is a purely mechanical process. Simplest spinning requires the cunning of the hand. Yet the spinner gets one pie per hour against the weaver's minimum of six. The carder too does better, almost as well as the weaver. There are historical reasons for this state of things. But they are not just merely because they are historical. Time has come for the Association to equalize, if not also to stabilize, the prices of all labour regulated by it. This, in many cases, will mean inviting the weaver to lower his scale of wages where he gets more than one anna per hour. Time may never come when all the weavers will voluntarily consent to the equalization process. But if the doctrine of equality of wages for all productive labour is sound, the Association must strive to approach the ideal as near as may be. Unless the whole jump is taken at once, the beginning must be made with raising the wages of spinners to a decent level for a decent hour's work. Vinoba is experimenting with spinning at the rate of nearly nine hours per day at the same time that he is taking his classes. His output per hour should be regarded as the standard output per hour entitling the spinner to the standard wage. I hope to publish shortly the results of Vinoba's labours.

My scheme presupposes living contact with the spinners' life. A body that would give an unexpected rise in wages will watch the course of the nickel pieces that may be distributed. It will be useless to raise wages gratuitously, if they are to be wasted in drink or extravagant marriage or other feasts. The

mission of khadi is almost like that of untouchability. The so-called higher classes have for ages utterly neglected the lower classes, with the result that the latter do not know the art of living. They think that they are mere 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'. The so-called upper classes have not escaped the punishment of their misdeeds, for they too do not know the art of living and would perish today if they had no help from the 'lower classes'. The mission of khadi is to correct this double evil by inviting the 'upper classes' to penance towards the 'lower classes'.

Let the village industries workers too see to it that the villagers occupied in the various industries organized by them get the minimum wage that may be fixed by the Association.

Harijan, 6-7-1935

NEED FOR A STANDARD WAGE

The following questionnaire to its agents and others has been issued by the A. I. V. I. A., the answers to reach the central office, Wardha, before 1st August next:

"It has been proposed that we should insist on the village artisan getting an adequate return for his labour in connection with all articles produced or sold under the aegis of the A. I. V. I. A. For this purpose it will be necessary to fix a working wage standard. Such standard should be the same for either sex for equal quantity of work. It may be based on an eight hour day with a prescribed minimum output. Such wage will enter into the cost, and the price should be fixed in relation to this. Ordinarily we may not be able to fix the prices in the competitive market, but we may do so for articles which do not enter into competition and for goods chosen for their special virtues which are appreciated by the consumers.

This questionnaire is sent out to invite your opinion on the following points:

1. Do you think it feasible to fix a minimum daily wage and ensure it to the workers by fixing prices ?

2. Should we fix our ultimate standard and work up towards it, or should we start with a low minimum and then raise it as we proceed ?

3. On what basis should it be arrived at ? Can you suggest a subsistence wage taking into consideration only food for the time being, as clothing should be made by personal effort ? Will half an anna per hour be too low ?"

Associations like the A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A. and such philanthropic institutions may not follow the commercial maxim of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest. The A. I. S. A. has certainly tried to buy in the cheapest market. Of this, however, in another column. Wishing to give the A. I. V. I. A. the benefit of my experience of the evolution of khadi, I initiated a discussion about the wages received by the artisans working under its influence. The result was the questionnaire.

It has already been discovered that the tendency among agents is to produce the required articles at as low prices as possible. Where may the axe be laid if not upon the artisan's earnings? Unless, therefore, a minimum rate be fixed, there is every danger of the village artisan suffering, though it is for his sake that the A. I. V. I. A. has been brought into being.

We have exploited the poor patient villagers far too long. Let not the A. I. V. I. A. intensify the exploitation under the guise of philanthropy. Its aim is not to produce village articles as cheap as possible; it is to provide the workless villagers with work at a living wage.

It has been argued that anything that may raise the price of articles made in the villages will defeat the purpose for which the A. I. V. I. A. has been brought into being, for, it is said, nobody will buy the village articles if the prices are too high. Why should the price of an article be considered too high, if it only provides a living wage for the manufacturer? The buying public has to be instructed to know the abject condition of the people. If we are to do justice to the toiling millions, we must render to them their due; we must pay them a wage that will sustain them; we must not take advantage of their helplessness and pay a wage that would hardly give them one full meal.

It is quite clear that the Association must refuse to compete with mill manufactures. We may not take

part in a game in which we know we must lose. In terms of metal, the big combines, whether foreign or indigenous, will always be able to outbid the effort of the human hand. What the Association seeks to do is to substitute false and non-human economics by true and human. Not killing competition but life-giving co-operation is the law of the human being. Ignoring the emotion is to forget that man has feeling. Not the good of the few, not even the good of the many, but it is the good of all that we are made to promote if we are 'made in His own image'.

A philanthropic body like the A. I. V. I. A. cannot shirk a consideration of the problems involved in the questionnaire. If the true solution appears to be impracticable, it must be its endeavour to make it practicable. Truth is ever practicable. Thus considered the programme of the Association may fitly be called adult education.

And if the Association is to secure for the artisan under its care a living wage, it must also pry into his domestic budget, and trace the course of every coin that is paid.

The most difficult question to determine would be the minimum or the living wage. I have suggested eight annas for eight hours' strenuous labour converted into a given quantity of the particular goods turned out by an artisan of good ability. Eight annas is a mere token representing a certain quantity of necessaries of life. If in a family of five there are two full workers, they would earn at the proposed rate Rs. 30 per month, allowing no holiday and no sickness gap. Thirty rupees per month is no extravagant income for five mouths. The method here proposed necessarily ignores the distinction of sex or age. But every referee will draw upon his own personal experience and report accordingly.

Harijan, 13-7-1935

A. I. S. A.

What is true of the artisans working through the A. I. V. I. A. is equally true of those who are working through the A. I. S. A. Only the A. I. V. I. A. has to write on a clean slate. The A. I. S. A. has to undo a tradition of fifteen years' standing, if it has to introduce a uniform minimum. In helping the numerous spinners it has also to deal with weavers, one-tenth of the number of spinners, besides carders, ginners and others. The wages of each class vary. The difference between those earned by weavers and those earned by spinners would appear to be too great to admit of equality. Whereas a spinner gets 2 pies per hour, a weaver gets one anna at the lowest and not unoften two. To bring the spinners to twelve pies from two is a very big problem, especially when it is remembered that they number nearly one lac and half.

But the Association to be worthy of its trust has to develop enough courage to do the right thing. Difficulties are there to be faced, not to cower us. We must trust those who buy khadi for the love of Daridranarayan to pay a higher price for it than they have done hitherto. If the trust is misplaced, we must face a fall, however big, in sales. Those who love khadi will buy it at any cost if they know that ninety-five rupees out of one hundred go into the pockets of Daridranarayan.

But after all the commercial use of khadi is its secondary and least use. Not more than one crore persons, i. e. city people, would need to buy khadi. These can be easily and comfortably clothed by twenty lacs of full-time artisans. The primary use of khadi is to find supplementary employment for the peasantry.

They have to be taught to spin their own yarn and even weave it themselves or have it woven. They become their producers and buyers or rather users even as they are their own cooks and eaters. This work we have hardly touched seriously as yet. Shri Banker is quietly and slowly organizing the change. Whilst that is being done, it is as well to set ourselves right by the spinners by offering them an adequate wage. Is it to be eight annas per day or less? Whatever the limit, what is to be the quantity of yarn expected in one hour to qualify the spinner to receive the given wage? The same question has to be solved for ginners, carders, weavers, and all those who are today working in the manufacture of khadi.

Will those who are interested in khadi and are at all conversant with the science favour me with their views on the proposed change in the scale of wages? If they favour the change, they will also say what minimum they will fix.

Harijan, 13-7-1935

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HOW TO BEGIN

Whether it is to be a standard rate or a minimum for khadi artisans, a change seems to be a certainty. With the exception of one dissentient, of the many opinions so far received none has opposed my proposal for fixing an increased rate. No one has yet been found to endorse the eight anna proposal. Some of the writers regard the eight anna proposal as fatal to khadi. The price of khadi will in that case have to be so far advanced, they say, that there will be very few buyers. Be that as it may, in any change worthy of the name some conditions will have to be fulfilled. It will therefore be wise to take time by the forelock and enforce the following immediately wherever it is at all possible :

1. The workers should master all the processes from cotton picking to weaving so as to be able to teach others.

2. Organizers should make a register of all the carders, spinners, weavers, etc., within their circle or jurisdiction.

3. They should know the variety of cotton used by their spinners and see that they do not attempt to spin a higher count than it is capable of.

4. Spinners and the other artisans should be warned that, unless they use khadi in their own households, they may not get any work.

5. The artisans so warned should have facilities put in their way, so as to enable them always to get their khadi for their labour.

6. Every hank of yarn received should be examined for its strength and evenness, all uneven and weak yarn being rejected, even as underbaked bread would be.

7. As a rule each spinner's yarn should be stocked separately, and woven when there is enough for a piece. This will ensure durability of khadi and an all-round improvement in the texture and appearance.

8. All pieces thus prepared should have labels attached to them giving the names of ginners, carders, spinners and weavers where they are all different.

9. Where artisans are members of families, the latter should be induced and encouraged to have all the processes done in their own homes. This will be easy when the wages are equalized or nearly so.

10. The lives and budgets of families coming under the influence of the workers should be carefully studied, and those who spend their earnings judiciously should be helped.

11. If ever it becomes necessary to restrict the number of artisans served by the Association, by reason of shortage of custom, those who have other means of livelihood should be first eliminated. At present, I understand, in several provinces it is not only the neediest who spin but also the thrifty women who want a little money for themselves to buy a few trifles rather than to have better food or to pay debts.

12. In every case the workers will have to closely examine the carding bows and the wheels, especially the latter with reference to the spindles and their revolutions. For the proposed increase will never be a rise pure and simple. It will be partly earned by greater and better output in the same time and partly there will be pure increase. No spinner who refuses to make any improvement in her or his manner of work is likely to get any increase unless the demand for khadi increases.

13. It follows from the last paragraph that new machines or parts will have to be supplied by the Associations on easy terms in the first instance. In many cases alterations in the *mal* (string) and the

spindle will automatically increase and improve the quality of the output.

All these conditions can be fulfilled only if the workers realize that they have a grand mission, and that they are but humble units in a vast family of artisans and labourers who are semi-starved or underfed.

I have not touched the question of cotton growing. So far I have dealt with the khadi that is manufactured for the market. Some different rules will govern self-sufficient khadi. It will never succeed without cotton being grown by spinners themselves or practically in every village. It means decentralization of cotton cultivation so far at least as self-sufficient khadi is concerned. For this we shall need a census of the villages served. For not every spinner or weaver has a plot (ever so tiny) of land, where he or she can grow cotton. Self-sufficient khadi is a much bigger proposition for which alone can the existence of the A. I. S. A. be justified. It is a field as yet untouched by it on any scale worth mentioning.

Harijan, 27-7-1935

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SELF-SUFFICIENT KHADI

The conditions promoting the success of and governing self-sufficient khadi are different from those governing khadi produced for the town-dweller who would not or cannot toil to make it at any stage of its manufacture. In khadi made for sale, every process from sowing and picking of cotton to weaving the yarn can be distributed with ease, especially when the cost of labour is equalized or nearly so. Specialization under supervision and on a co-operative basis must yield better returns. But where an article is produced for personal use the greater the concentration of all the processes in the same family or even the same hands, the greater the economy of time and money. A person, who has a little land which he can call his own even for a fair period and works on it daily, can have his khadi for mere labour put in by him or his during their odd moments. All he needs is instruction or education to show how each one can make his own khadi practically for nothing. When labour has to be paid for and that at an equal rate per period, spinning would take in the largest part of the outlay. For spinning yarn for one yard of khadi takes longer than any of the other processes anterior or posterior to it will take. If a person gins, cards and spins for himself, which he can do easily, he will get his khadi almost at the same price as mill cloth. The cost of an article represents the cost of labour spent in its production. So when the whole labour comes from the user himself the cost is practically nothing, when that labour is given during leisure hours. Self-sufficient khadi eliminates the middleman altogether. It is the easiest method of perceptibly increasing the income of the millions of the semi-starved villages.

But will the villager ever take to self-sufficient khadi? Yes, if we have faith accompanied by technical skill, or rather a living faith that will move mountains and give the worker all the skill necessary for his task which is undoubtedly difficult. But whether difficult or easy it has hardly been attempted as yet on any large or organized scale or a well-conceived plan. Not without a well-conceived, India-wide effort to educate the villagers to produce their own cloth and thus stop the unnecessary drain from their villages of what little they possess, will the A. I. S. A. have justified its existence. For as I have been of late insisting in these columns the message of khadi is nothing less than its universal use in the villages by local production and local use. The beginning has to be made by inducing cotton cultivation in every village, even in those where it is never known to have been grown. Without decentralization of cotton cultivation, universal manufacture in villages may not be possible. We have authentic examples of deserts having been turned into smiling gardens by judicious manipulation of the soil. It ought not, therefore to be impossible to grow enough cotton in every village for local use. Not only will this cheapen khadi for the villagers, but it will also improve the durability of khadi. Experience has conclusively demonstrated that the strength of yarn and the output are affected by the variety of cotton used and the manner of picking, cleaning, ginning, carding and spinning cotton. A material from which the famous Dacca muslin could be produced must demand gentle handling during all the processes it undergoes, before it comes out as *shabnam* or the morning dew.

Harijan, 3-8-1935

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THE BURNING QUESTION

Ever since Gandhiji wrote his article on the standard wage for all artisans, especially for the spinners, with whom we are at present dealing on a large scale, the reorganization of khadi production has been the burning question. Gandhiji has sometimes grudged giving time to the members of the Working Committee coming for advice, but he has never done so with anyone wanting to discuss the question of the hour. The presence of some of the members of the Working Committee like the President, and the Sardar, Shri Jairamdas, Jamnalalji, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Shri Gangadharrao Deshpande and Professor Kripalani, some of whom are members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh, and with all of whom khadi is an essential part of Congress work, stimulated the discussion and was most helpful. Gandhiji revealed to them the workings of his mind which ultimately led up to bringing this question to the fore. Trifles had served as a spark to set the mind and heart ablaze, and he could not be at peace unless justice was done. These trifles were (1) the discovery by an intimate co-worker, who visited the famous spinning and weaving centre at Savli, that the poor spinners who spent the whole day plying their wheels did not get more than two pies per hour; (2) a poor man who had purchased a piece of khadi from the bhandar found that it was tearing to pieces after one or two washings. He soon started inquiries and found that the complaints were true. The constant and vexatious disputes between several khadi workers, all of whom were equally pledged to serve the cause of Daridranarayan, confirmed his growing belief that commercial khadi was at the root of the trouble, and

he took no time in giving expression to what he instinctively felt, in that famous article on standard wage.

There was no question of conscious or deliberate injustice. Everything was being done with a view to finding work for the workless, and the scramble for reduction in prices was due to the unnatural competition with mill cloth. But in our hurry to do justice, we had unconsciously done some injustice to the spinners. On the other hand, there was no inclination, not to say attempt, on the part of friends who took part in these discussions to question the justice of the case. All that they had to urge were practical difficulties. Would not thousands be thrown out of employment, first by the high prices affecting the demand for khadi, and secondly by enforcing rigid tests on them ? 'In Bihar something like five thousand women walk ten miles a day to receive the present scanty wage. More would come if we could sell more khadi. What would happen to these poor women, if the demand for khadi disappeared ?' This was one of the chief question. 'Quite right,' said Gandhiji, 'I know the same is the state of things in Bengal villages and in South India. But I would put your proposition in a converse way. Supposing you gave one pie instead of two pies an hour that you give at present, you would be employing not 5,000 women but 10,000 women. And supposing these helpless women were ready to accept even that miserable pittance, would you dare to do it ? I say, you would not. That means that you will have to determine a point beyond which you cannot go. Call it, if you will, a 'helpless minimum'. But if that minimum has to be fixed, why not fix it once and for all, no matter whether it affects some of the producers for the time being adversely ? So long as the number of purchasers is limited, and the number of producers unlimited, there is no doubt that you will have to turn some of the producers away. Why not then have a deliberately fixed, high enough minimum wage to

ensure these poor women at least a living wage? Otherwise there would be no end to this unconscious exploitation. A paper manufacturer sends us paper from a place. He is paying the labourers at the rate of six pice per day, and says he hopes to make the paper cheaper. I tell him I will not have it cheaper.'

'Then,' objected a friend, 'you will now change the definition of khadi. It no longer remains hand-spun, hand-woven cloth, but cloth hand-spun and hand-woven at a particular wage.'

'There is no doubt. I am sorry that you are making the discovery so late.'

'But spinning is a supplementary occupation, we have been telling the world all these years. It is done only in one's spare hours.'

'Yes and no. I know that there are thousands who are doing it for the whole day. To them it is not a supplementary but a substantive occupation. And even if it is not, why not give them for an hour's work what you would usually give for any other hour's work?'

'Do you know that in some parts of Guntur district, people are taking to rice-pounding because it fetches a higer wage than spinning?'

'I do. But you support my argument. They will certainly choose whatever work fetches them a higher wage. Then why not dignify the spinner by a wage which will be equal to any other wage?'

'Practical difficulties are very great. You cannot induce these spinners to conform to your terms. You want a regular register of them, you want them to spin yarn of a particular count of particular evenness and particular strength. How will all that be done?'

'The difficulties have got to be conquered. Don't I know that for a considerable length of time there will be tales of long drawn out agony — some saying we cannot induce the spinners to spin for themselves, some saying we cannot get them to conform to our requirements?'

'But supposing they conform to our regulations, and we give them better machines and better spindles, they will automatically do more work and more than double the wage.'

'That they will do automatically but for no virtue of yours. That more production means more earning is obvious enough. But what are *we* going to do, by way of justice which we have denied them?'

'No,' said Gandhiji, summing up, 'we shall have to forget that khadi has to compete with mill cloth. Mill cloth is mill cloth and khadi is khadi. The mill cloth producer will always concentrate on cheapening it, we must concentrate on justice and a fair wage. There can be, therefore, no comparison between the two. As regards the practical difficulties, let us reduce our establishments, let us stop advertisements, let us not patronize the private producer. It is going to be the test of those who are pledged to khadi. Let them produce it themselves or pay for it enough to give our brothers and sisters a living wage. It is a question of the self-purification of all khadi-wearers. Let us not forget that our mission is the service of Daridranarayan. Difficulties there may be, but let us solve them gradually.'

It seemed to be generally agreed that the experiment must be started wherever possible and with varying but increased wages for spinners.

Harijan, 10-8-1935

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THE BOMBAY KHADI BHANDAR

The Bombay Khadi Bhandar is the largest khadi bhandar depot of the A. I. S. A. It is no single individual's property. It belongs to the A. I. S. A. as the sole trustees for Daridranarayan. As such its primary concern must be Daridranarayan. Though it has served as a means of giving honourable employment to some middle class people, it must not be regarded as an employment bureau for them. Since a new policy is in the course of adoption, reduction is being made in the staff in keeping with the requirements of the new policy. Hitherto extraordinary efforts have been made to push up sales of khadi sent from all parts of India and ordered by Shri Jerajani in accordance with patterns designed by his inventive genius. But this effort meant overhead charges out of proportion to the results achieved in terms of Daridranarayan. And it drew the attention of the provincial workers away from their main work which was to make khadi self-supporting or popular in their own provinces. The universal mission of khadi cannot be fulfilled without true provincial effort. That can be achieved only by its distribution as far as possible in the innumerable centres of production. No doubt some khadi will always be required for big cities like Bombay which will never produce it themselves. That will be a healthy demand to be met without extraordinary effort. The rich variety one sees in the city khadi shops was possible only because the Association put forth the effort to meet the varied tastes of the city public. But time has come, if khadi is to fulfil its mission, to turn the attention towards centres of production. They are far too few. Every village, if not every home, has to

be such a centre even as every home is a centre of production of cooked food. The economy of the kitchen is wholly different from the economy of the books. Even so is the economy of khadi. The contemplated change, then, means substantial reduction in the staff of large bhandars run by or on behalf of the A. I. S. A. It also means reduction in the number, if not disappearance, of certified private producers. How it will all be worked, it is difficult to say as yet. It is being carefully worked out by Shri Shankerlal Banker who has been travelling throughout India for that special purpose.

But meanwhile this is to warn the lovers of khadi, the votaries of Daridranarayan, that prices of khadi must go up, greater technical skill must be developed among khadi workers, a greater spirit of self-sacrifice must be evoked amongst all the classes connected with the production and distribution of khadi. Sales depots have taken delight in showing a progressive decline in the prices. I remember the time when I sold the first piece of very coarse khadi for over one rupee per yard. Such coarse khadi will not fetch two annas today. It is not on sale at khadi depots. This decrease has been brought about by progressive effciency in every department of khadi, but it has been largely purchased at the cost of the spinner. And yet the concrete shape of Daridranarayan is the spinner — the lowest paid labourer in all India. It was good that the A. I. S. A. found a means of employment on the widest scale possible for the chronic unemployed at a wage, be it ever so low, even one pie per hour. But if it is to discharge its trust, it must find at least a subsistence wage for the spinner. Her reciept for the spinning hour should be in proportion to the amount she would need to live if she worked for eight hours a day. What that amount is to be is not so much a matter of moment, as that there must be an increase in the rate of wages earned by the spinners. Henceforth

the report of A. I. S. A. should state not how much reduction in the price of khadi has taken place during the period under review, but they should take pride in showing how much increase has been made in spinning wage. It should not be satisfied, I cannot be satisfied, till the spinner's wage per hour has been put on a level with, say, the weaver's. And let the buying public remember that they are the unnamed members of that great trust, and that the spinners are their wards. Once that relation is realized there should be no difficulty in the progressive rise of khadi in the geometrical ratio. Would that every lover of khadi will .know his duty and falsify the fears of the unbelievers among khadi workers who think that the public will never pay a higher price for khadi ! ! !

Harijan, 10-8-1935

SELF-SUFFICING KHADI

From Madhepur centre in Bihar comes the news that in 10 villages 19 persons have had their yarn woven into khadi measuring 166½ yards for personal use, and that 82 persons in 22 villages had their yarn exchanged for khadi measuring 709 yards. This is good news.

Good news of distribution of seeds and sowing them for growing cotton for self-spinning comes from Payyanur and Nileshwar in Malabar. When cotton-growing for self-spinning becomes universal in the country, people can have their khadi for the mere labour spent upon it during leisure hours, if the home growers of cotton will learn all the processes as they do in Assam for silk in many homes. Silk cannot be universalized. Cotton can, and almost was at one time. This method means a most substantial addition to the national income, and a perfect scheme of employment for the millions of the partially unemployed in this country.

Though the proposition is thus simple to state, it is undoubtedly very difficult to work. But it is in no way impossible. It needs no great outlay of capital. The processes to be learnt are simple; the tools required are all ready in the villages or can be quickly made. The greatest stumbling block is the disinclination of the people to work at new things and to exert intelligence. Generations of enforced idleness and consequent starvation have led to loss of hope, stamina, and even the will to live. No greater calamity can befall a people than that they should lose hope even to the extent of the will to live. But those who have not lost hope have to work with greater zeal

than ever before with an unquenchable faith in their mission. Their faith will certainly overcome mountains. In this glorious country, where sufficient for food and clothing can be produced without much labour and skill, there need never be any loss of hope.

But hope has to be translated into progressive action based on ever-increasing knowledge of the science of khadi. Workers have to respond to the lead that the centre may give from time to time, and they have also to anticipate the objections of the villagers whom they have to serve. For that purpose they have to come into closest touch with them. Their approach must be accompanied by sympathy and trust. They may never appear before the villagers as patrons, but they should appear as voluntary servants who have hitherto neglected their trust. Given a due fulfilment of this primary indispensable condition, the rest will follow as night follows day.

Harijan, 24-8-1935

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PRIVATE PRODUCERS BEWARE

Whilst the new policy of giving an adequate wage to the spinners and others working at the manufacture of khadi is taking shape, the question of certified private producers of khadi comes up for serious consideration. They are responsible for a large quantity of khadi. The Association has a duty towards these no less than towards the wage-earners. The contracts made with them must be duly fulfilled. But the duty ends there. The whole organization of the Spinners' Association is or should be run as a trust for the spinners whose lot must be progressively improved. Private producers are certified primarily for the benefit of the spinners. They should get their profit through the service of the latter, not at their expense as, we discover, they and others are doing.

But certificates issued to them need not be withdrawn, if they will put themselves on a par with the direct agents of the Association. But they will have to radically revise their method of work, if they will do so. They will have to be satisfied with a reduction of their profits; they may have even to suffer loss. They have to maintain in accordance with the requirements of the Association, registers of the spinners and other wage-earners served by them. They have to produce proof of payment of wages, and collect and supply statistics regarding them. This may be too onerous for them. The risk entailed by the probable increase in the price of khadi may be too great to be borne by them. The requirements of the Association may be too exacting for producers who have undoubtedly to work hard for making the profits they do. Those who feel so should from now begin to wind

up their khadi business. Those who wish to continue to do khadi work should put themselves in touch with the agents of the Association. Only they should know that the slightest neglect in the observance of the conditions will entail cancellation of certificates. Loss or no loss, strictest honesty is the essential condition of continuation of their contract with the Association. Only those, therefore, should continue who are lovers of khadi and devotees of Daridranarayan for whose sake they will not mind losses. Those who are themselves not users of khadi in their own persons and homes need not entertain any hope of continuing the contract.

Harijan, 7-9-1935

THE MINIMUM WAGE

Our objective is, as the name implies, to represent the spinners who are the lowest paid labourers, i. e. to improve their lot. Therefore we have to show a progressive improvement in their lot. You must remember my earliest formula which holds good as much today as it did then — a spinning wheel in every home, and a loom or looms in every village. That is the ideal of self-sufficing khadi, and if I could take you with me, I would have you serve the spinners not so much by selling their khadi as by making them prepare it for their own use. We make our own chapatis, there are no hotels in villages; in the same way all villagers should make their own khadi. Not that some of them will not make extra khadi, but that will depend only on the demand. We shall certainly take orders from the city people who will want our khadi, and we shall get that khadi done by those who will get a wage per hour proportionate to their daily need. This may mean a temporary rise in the present price of khadi. We may no longer exploit the poverty of the people. I have never said it was deliberate exploitation. I take the fullest responsibility for all we have done during the past fifteen years, and what we have done was inevitable. But we have now to strike a new departure. We have ignored the proletariat for centuries, and whilst we have arrogated to ourselves the right of commanding their labour, the thought has never crossed us that they have a right to dictate their wage, that labour is as much their capital as money is ours. It is time we began to think in terms of their needs, their hours of work and leisure, and their standard of living.

It is idle to argue that the spinners themselves would plump for a smaller wage for all than a higher wage for a few. That is the argument of every exploiter and slave-owner, and indeed there were unfortunate folks amongst slaves who hugged the chains of slavery. But why should you fear that the majority of them will find their occupation gone? Haven't we other occupations to recommend them? In Andhra Sitaram Sastri has not hesitated to encourage them to prefer paddy-husking to spinning as the former gives a better wage. Let us not deceive ourselves. We have made their necessity our opportunity, and have never looked at the question from their point of view.

Harijan, 14-9-1935

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THREE QUESTIONS

Shri Gopabandhu Choudhury, writing from Bari-Cuttack, sends the following three questions:

> "1. In self-sufficing khadi what should be the price of surplus khadi?
>
> 2. If a villager has cotton but no spinners to give him the requirements of his family and he wants to have his cotton spun for his own family requirements by his co-villagers or neighbouring villagers, what should be the wage? Will the proposed living wage for commercial khadi be applicable here? Or will it be left to mutual adjustment?
>
> 3. What should be the wage when the spinner has no cotton of her own and she spins not for wages in cash for living but for cotton, and that also till she earns a quantity sufficient for her cloth need?"

The price of surplus khadi passing through the A. I. S. A. can only be the same as that of any other in the same province. Now that for the most part khadi sales, except for the requirements of cities, will be confined to provinces where it is manufactured, the prices in different provinces will perhaps vary more than they do now. But there cannot be any distinction between surplus khadi and any other. Indeed all khadi can only be surplus khadi, for khadi will not be accepted by the Association or its branches from anyone who is not himself or herself a full wearer of khadi. Of course the rule may have to be relaxed during the transition stage.

On the analogy of the first answer, there is no doubt that so far as the Association is concerned it must pay all spinners alike. But the Association will

not regulate the dealings between spinners themselves. They must be allowed to adjust their own mutual relations. Any other policy must fail.

In the third case also the same principle applies as in the first two. The thing to remember is that the Association will be responsible for the payment of the minimum subsistence wage where it is itself concerned. If its policy becomes popular and therefore general, no doubt it will be difficult, if not impossible, for anyone to get things done for less wages. And the co-operation between the A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A. may become so powerful that wages in every other department will at once be levelled up to their standard. The success of the effort will depend upon the hearty response from the buying public. If they will realize that they may no longer exploit the poor villagers on whom depends their existence, the problem of unemployment and semi-starvation will be automatically solved.

Harijan, 5-10-1935

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A KNOTTY QUESTION

Since the talk of the rise in the wages of spinners khadi lovers are filled with all kinds of vague fears. For instance, they fear a fall in the public demand for khadi in view of a rise in its price. I am hoping that the public will appreciate the little rise that must take place in the price of khadi. They have hitherto benefited by the continuous reduction in prices, which hitherto it has been the aim of the Association to achieve by extraordinary effort in the direction. The price of khadi has been never so low as it is today. And yet the sales have gone down owing to want of propaganda. If some systematic propaganda is carried on without increasing administrative expenses, I have little doubt that the sales of khadi can be increased in spite of the rise that will take place in the prices.

But it is well to be prepared for the worst. The Association must not be deterred from doing the just thing by the spinners for fear of the public demand falling. It must, however, if need be, remove from its list of spinners those who do not need the support of spinning for their food. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of spinners who spin for gaining a few pice not for buying food but for buying tobacco, bangles or the like. If there is pressure, these may be told to abstain from competition with those who need coppers for their food. The vast majority of spinners are such. The question, therefore, for workers is to find who are the needy ones in terms of the Association scheme. From the definition will be excluded those petty cultivators who employ labour and who are not ordinarily in want of food and clothing and who are not obliged to sell their holdings or other

property to buy food with. But it will strain every nerve to give spinning work or other work accessory to spinning, assuring for every one of the occupations not less than a minimum subsistence wage at the rate of eight hours a day to all those landless and propertyless workers who would starve partially or wholly but for the work found for them by the A. I. S. A. or the A. I. V. I. A. Conversely, these Associations will not concern themselves — not for want of will but for want of sheer ability — with those who eke out a living in some other way. If these bodies succeed to the full in their mission, they will have not only fulfilled their mission, but they will have indirectly helped all the other needy ones and turned their lives of blank despair into those of bright hope.

Harijan, 5-10-1935

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THE CRISIS IN KHADI

The Board of the Spinners' Association met in solemn conclave to consider Gandhiji's proposal for a new departure in their khadi policy. As one of the members said this was the solemnest meeting he had attended during the past fifteen years. The proposal for a living wage for all the workers in khadi production was simple enough, as every one of the members agreed, and the principle at the back of it was unexceptionable. But the working of it seemed, to some of them, to be the most complex procedure. The new departure had already been made in Maharashtra, and some wanted to wait and profit by the experience in this province. Some were afraid that it was not possible to confine the sales to the provinces where khadi was manufactured, and that we would be confronted with the difficulty of finding a market for khadi. When the sales were dwindling even under the present conditions, they were bound to disappear under the obviously less favourable conditions. In a province like Andhra where it was possible to get khadi of fine texture for a particular price today, it would be impossible to sell khadi of a coarser texture for the same price under the new conditions. The administrative charges would not be lower but proportionately higher with the narrowing of the field of production, for the new policy required better technical skill, more care, and more attention to detail. There was thus an inevitable loss involved in the very working of the new policy. Should this loss also be charged to the consumer, and khadi made dearer than the higher spinners' wage would render it? Experiments could be made and would be made, but

then don't expect the workers to produce a balanced budget. And so on and so forth.

Gandhiji tried to meet all these objections and doubts and difficulties by further elucidating the principle. "We must," he said, "once for all dismiss the thought of competing with futile, soul-killing economics. Do you know the insidious way in which Japanese fents are glutting the market? Whereas less than five years ago they were a few thousand yards, they amount to millions of yards today. How can you compete with these? No, we must no longer aim at reducing the prices in order to meet this competition. We have all these years thought of the consumer and done precious little for the spinner, forgetting that the Association was a spinners' association, not an association of consumers. We have to be true representatives of the spinners, which we have ceased to be. The result is that we have simply jogged on and relied on the political upheavals and indulged in a kind of gamble. 'What is the use of all the fancy advertisements that you have been giving?' I asked Jerajani. 'We shall soon end in justifying the charge that we are maintaining the institution in order to provide work for the middle class unemployed.' It is therefore that I suggest that we should no more incur losses in order to exploit the neediest of our fellow-men. 'In order to give a hundred women a satisfactory wage, you will run the risk of depriving thousands of them of employment,' is the question that was put to me. I say it is a crisis that it is necessary to produce in order to get rid of a remittent fever. Our goal is to see a spinning wheel in the hands of every adult villager and a loom in every village. We may have produced millions of rupees worth of khadi, but we have gone nowhere nearer the goal. I ask you to forget the cities and the consumers in the cities. Concentrate on making the thirty crores of our villagers produce and use their own khadi, and the one crore

or so of the city-dwellers will automatically begin wearing khadi. Do not mind a temporary lull or a breakdown. If there is no demand, do not produce the supply. Where your bhandars are run at a loss close them down, and tell all those who care to have your khadi that you are prepared to get it made for them but only at the revised rates.

"But I do not want to thrust my proposal on you. You may reject it, if it fails to carry conviction. Do not assume on your shoulders heavier responsibility than they can bear. Cut your coat according to your cloth. Let me tell you that in the production centre at Savli there are already spinners who are satisfying the conditions of the new wage and have begun to earn from three to four annas daily. Concentrate on self-sufficing khadi wherever it is possible, and a healthy khadi atmosphere will grow out of it. In Kathiawad, for instance, for a time they made desperate attempts to run several centres and to stimulate the sale of khadi thus produced. They have given it up now, and among the replies that Shri Shankerlal Banker has received is one from the Secretary of the Kathiawad Branch to the effect that he has no criticism to offer and no opinion to express on the new policy, inasmuch as all the production in that centre consists of self-sufficient khadi."

The result of the discussion was a resolution (printed below) which was unanimously adopted. It defines in great detail the new policy, and sets out elaborately instructions for workers everywhere.

M. D.

* * *

[The following momentous resolution was passed by the Council of the A. I. S. A. that met at Maganwadi on the 11th, 12th and 13th instant, Gandhiji presiding.]

1

This Council is of opinion that the wages now paid for spinning are inadequate, and therefore resolves that they be raised and a suitable standard be fixed so that spinners may at least receive a minimum wage calculated on the basis of eight hours' efficient work, sufficient at least to procure clothing (20 yds. per year) and maintenance in accordance with a scientifically prescribed scale of minimum food requirements. All concerned should try, as circumstances permit, for a progressive rise in the wages scale, so as to reach a standard enabling each spinning family to be properly maintained out of the earnings of its working members.

2

In order to guide the A. I. S. A. workers in the execution of the principle underlying the foregoing proposition, the following should be regarded by all branches and bodies working in affiliation to or in any other way, under the Association, as the settled policy of the Association until it is altered in the light of further experience by the Council.

1. The mission of the Association is to make every home in India self-sufficing through khadi with reference to its clothing requirements, and to promote the welfare of spinners who are the least paid among khadi artisans and all others engaged in the different cotton processes beginning with growing cotton and ending with the weaving of khadi.

2. All the branches and affiliated bodies shall so work the scheme as to avoid all losses, that is, so as to restrict their production to the demand within their own selected areas commencing with their immediate neighbourhood and never extending beyond their province except in so far as they are called upon by other provinces to meet the latter's demand.

3. It is therefore imperative that those who work for the production of khadi, whether as artisans, sellers

or otherwise, shall use khadi for their clothing requirements to the exclusion of every other kind of cloth.

4. In order to avoid surplus production, producers may restrict their operations only to those spinners who solely depend upon spinning for their daily bread for part of the year or the whole of it. Branches and other bodies shall maintain an accurate register of all the spinners and other artisans empolyed by them and shall deal directly with them. In order to ensure the use of the wages for clothing and food, a part or the whole of them may be paid in kind, i. e. khadi or other necessaries of life.

5. In order to avoid overlapping, undue competition, or duplicating of expenses, where there are more khadi producing organizations than one, the area of operation of each shall be previously defined. Private certified producers will not be encouraged by the Association. Among those that are already certified, those only who will work strictly under the same rules that govern the Association branches and take all risks without any prospect of recouping themselves from the Association will have their certificates renewed on the strict understanding that any breach of the rules that may be laid down from time to time or instructions given will involve automatic withdrawal of their certificates.

6. It should be understood that it is the primary and imperative duty of all organizations working under the Association to promote the scheme of self-sufficing khadi. Production of khadi for meeting the demand of cities or of khadi wearers outside cities who do not spin for themselves is a secondary or supplementary duty. No organization will be considered bound to produce or sell such khadi.

Harijan, 19-10-1935

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NEW KHADI SCHEME

The resolution adopted by the A. I. S. A. regarding spinners' wages and khadi policy generally, deserves the careful study of every khadi worker. It can produce great changes, if the new policy is properly worked. In order to work it properly, all the instructions issued from time to time from the Centre should be meticulously carried out.

Self-sufficing khadi has to receive the first place in all khadi organizations. In a way self-sufficing khadi and production for sale will go together. Production for sale will be a by-product of self-sufficing khadi, and the latter will ensure the success of the former. As the condition of production is that the workers must be khadi-clad, they will have to make or take khadi for themselves. This they can easily do out of the (for them) very big rise in their wages which they will be receiving without having expected or demanded it. But receipt of wages will depend upon the surplus production which to be of use must command a ready sale. Thus self-sufficing methods will be easy where there are producing centres. For the spinners and other artisans will be more open to conviction than the others with whom workers have never come in touch.

But some ask, who will buy khadi at higher prices? In my opinion this betrays ignorance and want of faith and resourcefulness.

Hitherto we have confined our attention to stimulating demand in the cities; we have been urban-minded. We have never cared to study the localities immediately surrounding centres of production; we have neglected the very producers themselves. Now,

before we even tested the latter, we seem to have confidence that they will respond. Why should we not have the same confidence about the people in the surrounding localities? Surely they need cloth for their daily use. Is it too much to expect them to take in some khadi manufactured by their next-door neighbours? I know that those who have made an earnest effort in that direction have never failed. Failure has been with us, not with the prospective buyers. They are always with us, it does not matter what they buy and use today. If we would study the wants of the surrounding localities, we would produce khadi that would suit their taste and arrest their attention. Khadi workers have done that before now with success for the sake of the city-dwellers. Will they now turn their attention towards rural areas? It is not so much the dearness of khadi that turns people away from it. It is our want of faith and resourcefulness. If we have faith, we shall find that the same millions are open to us as they are to the vendors of fents that come to us from the Far East. The latter rely upon the cheapness of their pieces to produce a demand for their wares. We may rely upon local patriotism and the tastefulness of our wares to tempt the would-be buyers of cloth.

It is not without full justification that the Council of the A. I. S. A. has insisted upon every khadi organization being self-supporting and hence autonomous. They may no longer rely on the Centre to spoon-feed them. The Centre fund should be freed for tapping areas we have hitherto neglected.

Harijan, 26-10-1935

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NEED FOR HUMANE CUSTOM

Dr. P. C. Ray, who at his ripe age of 75 is exhibiting in the interest of suffering humanity the energy of youth, writes:

> "I had been to Atrai, Talora, and Sariakandi, the latest centre where the charkha had been introduced. Owing to trade depression consequent on the very low price of the chief agricultural products of this quarter, namely rice and jute, the condition of the peasants has been very much adversely affected. This is especially the case at Sariakandi. From the railway station I had to travel by boat for six hours, and on the return journey the current being against us it took fully fifteen hours. On my way the *manji* (head boatman) told me that the introduction of the charkha has been the means of saving many lives (जीवनदान the very word he used). Nearly four to five hundred charkhas are plying; and the people beseiged me begging for more.
>
> As the yarn produced here is comparatively of finer counts, there is very little sale of the cloth in Bengal and we have to seek a market for it in Bombay. Hence the great difficulty in the matter of disposal of the produce, and you know all about it. If we lose the Bombay market, we shall have to encourage yarn of low counts so that the local spinners may themselves wear the cloth.
>
> Considering that the very tradition of spinning had been lost, it is wonderful how within a short period, that is a year and a half at the most, the people have so readily not only taken to the charkha but have produced such fine yarn. It requires, however, not only the patience of Job but also initial

expenditure of considerable amount of funds to revive the lost art and to keep it alive. However, in North Bengal much new ground has been tilled and there is hope to sustain us. *Nil desperandum* should be our motto.

I am now touring by boat in the adjoining district of Pabna and learning something about the economic condition of the people round about."

The custom for fine khadi has fallen off even before the expected or rather threatened rise in prices. When it falls further, if it does, it will do so not because of the rise in prices but undoubtedly because of want of love or humanity in the buyer. Humanity does not search for low prices in a spirit of bargain. The humane in man even in his purchases seeks opportunities of service, and therefore wants to know first not the price of the article of purchase but the condition of its producers, and makes purchases in a manner that serves most the most needy and deserving. If a sufficiently large number of men and women were actuated by this spirit of love of fellow beings, there would be an ever-increasing demand for khadi, and now more than ever because of the knowledge that extraordinary care is being taken to assure to the humblest spinner at least a subsistence wage — a wage which would enable her not merely to eke out a living somehow but which would enable her to get sustaining food.

Side by side with the attempt to give khadi artisans a subsistence wage there must be an attempt to find a better, i. e. more natural, market for khadi. We have hitherto been satisfied with the easy way of obtaining custom only in the big cities — such as Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, etc. This was surely wrong. I have suggested to Dr. Ray that he should, if his health permits, deliver his message of love to the places surrounding the producing centres. The whole of Bengal wears fine cloth. Why should it not wear fine khadi? Under the new scheme it is possible to cheapen khadi if Bengal will produce cotton not for

speculation but strictly for home use. But that day may be far off. For the time being Bengal, as the rest of India, should buy khadi for humanity's sake, not in a commercial spirit, counting the cost. We do not count the cost and find out what our children or our aged parents cost us. We support them at any cost. Should we do less for our millions of brothers and sisters who are starving by reason of our criminal neglect of them for centuries? We may leave no part of India neglected. The science of khadi requires decentralization of production and consumption. Consumption should take place as nearly as possible where khadi is produced. All effort should be directed towards that end. We may produce for the demands of the cities, but should never depend upon them as we would on the local market. We must first study the local market and supply its wants. And since all khadi artisans and, wherever possible, all artisans working under the aegis of the A. I. S. A. or the A. I. V. I. A. will be expected to use khadi, a minimum demand will thus always be assured. Satish Babu and Shri Jethalal of Anantpur have made independent calculations, and have concluded that self-sufficing khadi will mean 2 yards of sale outside against 3 yards of wear by the artisans. If the calculation is correct, self-sufficing khadi to be popular will need considerable support from local markets. Since other industries will go hand in hand with khadi, it may be that self-sufficing khadi will receive help through village industries other than khadi. The test of self-sufficing khadi lies in the fact that it will cost the wearer practically nothing but his labour. Self-sufficing khadi will never spread unless local markets are created all over the country and demand stabilized. In order to ensure stabilization it is necessary to define areas for every producing centre so as to avoid overlapping and unhealthy competition among workers attached to the same organization.

Harijan, 2-11-1935

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THE IDEAL AND THE PRACTICAL

Shri Gopabandhu Chaudhry writes:

"In the article "Need for Humane Custom' you refer to a calculation that 'self-sufficing khadi will mean 2 yards of sale outside against 3 yards of wear by artisans etc.' Apparently this calculation is based on the fact that for the price of cotton and weaving charges the self-sufficing spinner will have to spin a little extra. Of course you admit that the spinner can also rely on other village industries for the income to enable her to purchase the cotton or pay the weaver. But the reading of the article leaves an impression that the success of self-sufficing khadi entirely depends upon the sale of khadi. But is this a correct ideal? Is not the ideal of self-sufficing khadi this that in a majority of cases the spinners will spin their own cotton or purchase their cotton and pay the weaver from their earnings from other village industries or agricultural labour?

Otherwise, when our aim is to make every home in the village self-sufficient, where will the extra two yards for outside produced by the spinners sell? Will the demand of the cities be possibly so large?

It seems that by tacking self-sufficing khadi on to the sale of commercial khadi we make the case for the former weak and give it practically a secondary place in the minds of khadi workers which you want to revolutionize. Self-sufficing khadi ought to thrive independently on its own merits, as there is enough unutilized land to grow the cotton required and unemployed leisure to spin the yarn."

The ideal no doubt is for every family to grow, spin, weave and wear its own cotton, just as it is for

every family to own land and grow its own corn, cook and eat it. But we know that every family won't and can't realize the ideal; we know too that success will not attend the worker immediately he begins to preach the unadulterated message of self-sufficing khadi. What Gopabandhu Babu has himself suggested is itself an intermediary stage, that of a householder buying enough cotton, spinning it himself, having the yarn woven, and paying the charges from his savings. But there are millions who have no savings, and there are millions who purchase their cloth without performing any of the processes. To spin for oneself and pay for cotton and weaving out of the proceeds of some other industry is an intermediate stage. To spin extra and from the proceeds of that labour to pay for weaving is yet another intermediate stage, and perhaps the easiest both from the worker's and the weaver's point of view. In working out this stage we have readymade khadi centres. There the workers have to induce spinners and other artisans to wear khadi, if they are to continue to get work through the A. I. S. A. agency. There are many among them who depend for their maintenance entirely on their labour spent on spinning, weaving, carding or dyeing. These can only wear khadi, if they work at producing surplus khadi and command the sale of such products. This ought not to be difficult, if in spite of the rise in the spinner's wage the existing demand for khadi continues.

In practice all the stages will be worked simultaneously. What the new scheme does is to put the emphasis on the right spot and state what the goal is in unmistakable terms. Khadi workers will no longer concentrate on increasing sales and reducing the price of khadi. They are henceforth to concentrate on people becoming self-sufficing about their cloth requirements at least to the extent of spinning. They will have to establish personal touch with the artisans,

befriend them, know their wants, and help them progressively to improve their economic condition by making the best possible use of their leisure hours consistently with equal opportunity for all. This ought to be a good enough programme for the most ambitious worker. The most difficult task will be on the one hand to open the eyes of understanding of the millions and persuade them to use their leisure hours for their own betterment, and on the other to persuade the buying class — the city people and the middlemen — to realize that in the long run it pays them if they buy village manufactures even though their cost may be apparently somewhat higher than they have hitherto paid and even though the appearance be not quite what they have been used to. It pays them because it raises the material condition of the people and therefore their purchasing power. The new scheme is, therefore, calculated to draw the best out of the whole of the nation irrespective of 'caste, colour or creed'. The question ultimately resolves itself into this: Have we for this task workers enough of the requisite purity, self-sacrifice, industry and intelligence?

Harijan, 30-11-1935

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EVIL OF CREDIT SALES

Whilst the whole policy of the A. I. S. A. about khadi is being overhauled, it is well to remind those who are in charge of the numerous khadi depots that the custom of selling khadi on credit has on the whole resulted in loss rather than gain to khadi. The temptation to give credit to friends, acquaintances and monied men is no doubt very great. Often it offends them if credit is refused when, they contend, no risk is to be run. These good people do not realize that it is wrong to expect a salesman to make invidious distinctions. Numerous complaints are received from managers of khadi depots about friends and well-to-do men not discharging the debts incurred by them. To issue processes of law for the recovery of debts is a thankless and expensive task and often means more worry than it is worth. Hence even at the risk of offending and even losing some customers the safe course is never to depart from the golden rule of 'no credit sales'.

Let the khadi workers realize that the mission of khadi is not to be confined to the cities, it has to spread among the millions of villages who are waiting to hear the call. We do not know how to reach them. We have hitherto tried the round-about way. We shall not find the direct and the true way in the vain attempt to show ever-increasing sales in the books of city depots. Let them know that it is the surplus khadi that is to find its way to cities. The vast quantity has to be made and used by the villagers themselves. The true way to reach the villagers is to concentrate on them in their own cottages. City sales, therefore, can be no index of the progress of the

mission of khadi. Khadi statistics of the future have to show the progress made from year to year in the villages. If a large number of workers are to be freed for the spread of khadi in the villages, we must reduce our labours in the cities. One way of doing it is religiously to do away with credit sales and confine our attention to those who really want khadi and appreciate the virtue of cash payment. Credit sales invariably mean increase in prices, for they involve more work, i. e. more expenses. Considered from all points of view credit sales have nothing to recommend them except the doubtful convenience of a few customers. But khadi exists not for the convenience of the few. It is intended for the benefit of all. In restricting khadi sales, therefore, to cash transactions the A. I. S. A. seeks the welfare not only of the hungry millions but also of the city-buyers of khadi.

Harijan, 7-12-1935

RURAL EXHIBITIONS

Quite a novel experiment was started by the A. I. V. I. A. by having a small exhibition at Maganwadi, to which admission was kept deliberately free, in order to enable those who had not been to Lucknow to have an idea of what the Lucknow exhibition must have been like. A number of charts and fresco-panels were brought from the Lucknow exhibition, and the main industries have of course been there on the premises. But it was not as well attended as it should have been. The people have yet got to be educated. Most of the village folk who come to Wardha come either in search of work or come to the weekly market to sell their vegetables and other products and to buy their weekly provisions. They have neither the time nor the inclination to go to an exhibition and have not the knowledge of letters to follow our charts. We shall have to take our exhibitions to their doors, suit our times to their times, and make our charts intelligible enough for them. But the Wardha exhibition was more for the people of Wardha than for those from the villages. The people of Wardha have in general adopted an attitude of disinterested detachment to the new-fangled experiments around them and are more or less like Peter Bells. Even as there are many villages in India, there are many Wardhas too. Gandhiji's remarks in declaring the exhibition open were addressed to these town people.

" As I was coming to Maganwadi, " he said, "I saw the weekly bazaar that is held here every Sunday. That bazaar has the raw produce as well as manufactures for raw produce exhibited in abundance. This exhibition has these exhibited on a very humble scale.

I therefore wondered how our exhibition compared with the weekly bazaar. The fundamental difference is that the exhibition is held entirely with a view to service of the village and the town folk, whereas the bazaar is a business concern in which the villager is exploited. He is made to sell his wares as cheap as possible, often even below cost price. At this exhibition there is hardly any buying and selling. This exhibition is an attempt to educate the residents of Wardha in their duty towards the villages surrounding them, and to educate the villagers in what is possible for them to better themselves in every way. The exhibition teaches them how to keep their villages clean, what food to eat, and how to improve their industries and thus earn a little more than they do today. So far as the town-dweller is concerned the exhibition forcibly brings to his mind the various ways in which he is exploiting the villager, and how best he may serve the villager by going in for his wares. The Lucknow exhibition opened the eyes of those who visited it to the wonderful capacity of our village craftsmen, and even this will do so somewhat. I may tell you here that, though the admission here has been kept free, at Lucknow it was not free. Reports have been published that the exhibition there resulted in a heavy loss. They are wrong. The receipts from the sale of tickets exceeded Rs. 25,000. There were besides receipts from stall-holders. It is just possible that there will be a nominal profit. Those around Lucknow will not see such an exhibition in Lucknow for years to come. The Kumbha Mela recurs at long but regular intervals. The Congress and the exhibition may not be held again at the same place, and even if it is, it may be held at an indefinitely long interval, especially because the tendency, I hope, now will be to select not big cities but small towns for their venue. But local exhibitions like this should be inexpensive annual efforts of growingly educational value. The village

oilman has, for instance, deteriorated nowadays. He adulterates the oil with cheap and spurious stuffs. He will learn here how it is profitable to make the oil absolutely pure and unadulterated. The paper-maker will learn here how to make the paper neat and lasting. As time passes we should be able to show improvements in these processes. I know that we have been able to produce little effect during the year on our surroundings or on the villages in the neighbourhood. But that does not disappoint me. We have to plod on. Those of you who have come here have to go forth to the villages as advertising agents and to draw the villagers to such exhibitions. The tragedy today is that the town-dweller is becoming increasingly indifferent to the villages, that he even believes that the villages are going to be destroyed in the near future. They certainly will be, if we continue to prefer mill-made articles to hand-made ones. Those of you who have come here have to go out as preachers of the gospel of rural-mindedness.

"A factory employs a few hundreds and renders thousands unemployed. I may produce tons of oil from an oil mill, but I also drive thousands of oilmen out of employment. I call this destructive energy, whereas production by the labour of millions of hands is constructive and conducive to the common good. Mass production through power-driven machinery, even when State-owned, will be of no avail.

"But why not, it is asked, save the labour of millions, and give them more leisure for intellectual pursuits? Leisure is good and necessary up to a point only. God created man to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, and I dread the prospect of our being able to produce all that we want, including our foodstuffs, out of a conjurer's hat." M. D.

Harijan, 16-5-1936

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A FALSE ALARM

When I saw a newspaper report purporting to be a summary of what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said on khadi during his recent visit to the khadi bhandar at Bombay, I refused to believe it. It seemed to me to be so thoroughly contrary to what I had understood to be his considered view about khadi. I therefore sent the cutting to the Pandit, and the following is the reply he promptly sent me:

> "I attended and spoke at several dozen meetings in Bombay — I have lost count of them — and had no time to see reports. I spoke in Hindustani of course, and reporting was no easy matter; — and then condensed reports are apt to be misleading. The report of what I said on khadi, however, was pointed out to me and was corrected the same day or the next day. What I had said was that for many reasons — economic, political, social — khadi was an important item in our present programme and must be encouraged, but that I did not think that it could finally solve our poverty problem, especially if the present social system continued. This system transferred the improvements and additional earnings of the peasant to the landlord. But I pointed out that this theoretical argument did not apply today. For this I said that, although I was in favour of big industry, I believed that even with the increase of industrialization there would be considerable room for the development of cottage industries in India. At present, of course, they were even more important from various points of view."

This position may not satisfy 'wholehoggers'. But it is vastly different from the misleading report. Such

misreporting is the lot of public men, especially in India, where they have to speak in an Indian language which reporters do not always understand and which has invariably to be translated into English for the purpose of transmission by wire. The moral is that the public should wait for authentic information before believing the so-called pronouncements of leaders in important matters.

From the letters I have received I see that the report created great uneasiness among some khadi workers. To them I should like to give a warning. It is fortunate that, for all practical purposes, what Pandit Jawaharlal actually says is satisfactory. He is too noble to say anything to please anybody if he does not believe in it. The quotation from his letter, therefore, derives added weight from the fact that the helmsman of the Congress holds views favourable to khadi. But khadi workers should know that there are many important public men outside the Congress who decry khadi and would never touch it. They should know too that even in the Congress ranks there are some who do not believe in khadi, who are never tired of ridiculing it, and use it merely as a measure of discipline till they succeed in banishing it from the Congress programme. Khadi has progressed in spite of these obstacles. No doubt it would have made greater progress if we had not such opposition to contend against. It is a matter of very great consolation that Pandit Jawaharlal believes in khadi as he does. But what should khadi workers do if he, on further study, finds it necessary to declare himself against it ? I hope that after sixteen years of experience of khadi and its possibilities we have a sufficient number of confirmed believers whose faith in it is based on their own knowledge of its working. If it is still a derived faith, the prophecy of a great journalist will undoubtedly come true that on my death khadi will also die, and that the wheels that would be broken after the

natural event would be sufficient for full creamation of the body.

This nervousness over the false alarm is a portent, if it is a token of weak faith of khadi workers. I suggest to them that they examine their own position, and if they have doubts about the great economic importance of khadi, let them revise their attitude. In order to help them to carry on the examination I propose, if at all possible, in the next issue to put my view of the importance of khadi for India from several points of view.

Harijan, 6-6-1936

FOR UNCERTIFIED KHADI DEALERS

Unfortunately it has been found that owing to the increased scale of wages that are being offered to hand-spinners on behalf of the A. I. S. A. and a consequent slight rise in the price of certain style of khadi, several uncertified dealers are selling khadi as if it was certified by the A. I. S. A., and some of them do not even hesitate to defend their unpatriotic and unhumanitarian action on the ground that the A. I. S. A. is not a registered body. In order to ascertain the true legal position, instead of relying on his own ancient knowledge of law, Shri Rajagopalachari referred the matter to an eminent lawyer for opinion, and this is the latter's decisive opinion:

> " I have no doubt that the Tirupur merchant has been wrongly advised as to the law. The law protects unregistered bodies as much as registered bodies in this respect. To use an unregistered name, pretending to be somebody that he is not, is as much a deceit of the public as it would be if the name had been registered. Registration under a statute may have statutory consequences and protections; but in the protection of the public from deceit there is no distinction between registered and unregistered names. It is absurd *prima facie* that, because a name is not registered, he can assume the same name and pass off goods as certified by the A. I. S. A. An action will lie for injunction and damages. Injunction you will have. Damages will depend on proof that persons purchased believing the stuff had been made or certified by the A. I. S. A.
>
> If formal opinion with authorities is required, I shall get it drawn for you at an early date.
>
> OOTY, 23rd May, 1936 (Sd.) T. R. V. SASTRI "

The eminent lawyer is no other than the ex-Advocate-General of Madras, Shri T. R. Venkatarama Sastriar. I hope that in view of this opinion those dealers who are carrying on unauthorized sales of khadi as if they were authorized by the A. I. S. A., will desist from the practice which has been described as fraudulent. If it becomes necessary, opposed though I am to resort to law courts, I will not hesitate, in the interest of poor dumb spinners, to advise legal steps being taken against those who knowingly injure their poor sisters.

Harijan, 6-6-1936

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IS KHADI ECONOMICALLY SOUND?

If by the question is meant whether khadi can compete in price with Japanese 'fent' or even with the cloth manufactured by the Indian mills, the answer must be emphatically 'no'. But the negative answer would have to be given about almost everything turned out by man power as against labour-saving machine power. It would have to be so even with regard to goods manufactured in Indian factories. Cloth, iron and sugar made in factories require State aid in some form or other to withstand foreign competition. It is wrong to put the question in that way at all. In the open market a more organized industry will always be able to drive out a less organized one, much more so when the former is assisted by bounties and can command unlimited capital and can therefore afford to sell its manufactures at a temporary loss. Such has been the tragic fate of many enterprises in this country.

Any country that exposes itself to unlimited foreign competition can be reduced to starvation and therefore subjection if the foreigners desire it. This is known as peaceful penetration. One has to go only a step further to understand that the result would be the same as between hand-made goods and those made by power-driven machinery. We are seeing the process going on before our eyes. Little flour mills are ousting the *chakki*, oil mills the village *ghani*, rice mills the village *dhenki*, sugar mills the village *gud*-pans, etc. This displacement of village labour is impoverishing the villagers and enriching the monied men. If the process continues sufficiently long, the villages will be destroyed without any further effort.

No Chengis Khan could devise a more ingenious or more profitable method of destroying these villages. And the tragedy of it all is that the villagers are unconsciously but none the less surely contributing to their own destruction. To complete the tale of their woe let the reader know that even cultivation has ceased to be profitable. For some crops the villager does not cover even the cost of seed.

With all these deadly admissions, what do I mean by saying that khadi is the only true economic proposition? Let me then state the proposition fully: "Khadi is the only true economic proposition in terms of the millions of villagers until such time, if ever, when a better system of supplying work and adequate wages for every able-bodied person above the age of sixteen, male or female, is found for his field, cottage or even factory in every one of the villages in India; or till sufficient cities are built up to displace the villages so as to give the villagers the necessary comforts and amenities that a well-regulated life demands and is entitled to." I have only to state the proposition thus fully to show that khadi must hold the field for any length of time that we can think of.

The present pressing problem is how to find work and wages for the millions of villagers who are becoming increasingly pauperized, as anyone who will take the trouble of going to the villages can testify for himself and as is amply proved by contemporary expert evidence. The people are becoming poorer economically, mentally and morally. They are fast losing the will to work, to think, and even to live. It is a living death that they are living. Khadi supplies them with work, tools and a ready market for their manufactures. It gives them hope where but yesterday there was blank despair.

"Then why has khadi made so little progress, if it is such a hopeful proposition?" the sceptic asks. The answer is: the progress khadi has made in terms

of the millions, though little in itself, is comparatively the largest of all the other single industries. It distributes yearly the largest amount as wages among the largest number of wage-earners in the villages with the minimum of overhead charges, and every pice practically circulates among the people. This can be verified by anyone who would study the figures published by the A. I. S. A.

Khadi has to work against almost settled prejudices among the villagers, against unscrupulous competition without State protection, and against the prevalent opinion of so-called experts in the science of economics, against even the demand of khadi wearers for progressively cheaper khadi. It is thus largely a question of the education of the villagers and the city-dwellers in the true economics for this land of tears. These transcend all religions. Hindus, Mussalmans and Christians who live in the villages suffer from the same disease of poverty and want. If there is a difference, it is only one of degree.

I therefore maintain that, though yard per yard khadi may be dearer than mill-made cloth, in its totality and in terms of the villagers it is the most economic and practical proposition without a rival. Khadi may be interpreted to include other village industries for the purposes of a thorough examination of the proposition.

Harijan, 20-6-1936

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FOR KHADI WEARERS

Here are extracts from a longish letter from a Bihar correspondent:

"I have a complaint against you. I am a habitual khadi wearer. I have been using khadi since its first appearance. Till this day I am using it. I look upon it as a national dress. If I ever be obliged to give up khadi due to my poor circumstances, I shall be much pained. And the present unexpected increase in its prices without proportion will, I fear, drag me to that verge. I think many of my friends who stand where I do will be compelled to take to mill cloth in pain and shame. This will, I think, bring about the total collapse of the khadi movement.

I am told that you desire to pay more to the poor spinners. Well and good. But from whose pockets? The rich sympathizers of this movement have made themselves almost scarce. It will certainly be death to poor khadi wearers, if they are obliged to give up an ideal for which they stood and bravely fought. You have decided upon an increase at a very inopportune moment. Had you decided this at the time of your Dandi march, you could have done it with success. But the present decision is a great blunder. I fear by this you mean to give the movement a decent burial."

The following is from a U. P. correspondent:

"I have been a firm believer in khadi and have still my fullest faith in its efficacy to solve most of our evils. It has got a wonderful psychological effect on many minds. Since 1920 I have been religiously wearing and propagating khadi. But Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has so much minimized the importance,

necessity and utility of khadi that many staunch khadi wearers are placed in a fix and the weaker believers have got a secure shelter behind Panditji. The Congress has also relaxed the rigidity about the use of khadi, and you seem to be finding solace in your determined silence. Would you just guide us and let us know our duty under the present circumstances ? Another difficulty is due to the existing organization of the supplying source of khadi, the All India Spinners' Association. Under the present conditions khadi is becoming dearer and dearer and its supply is growing less and less. The independent and individual khadi producers have been almost debarred from producing even a yard of khadi. The rules and restrictions seem firstly unreasonable, secondly impossible to be followed, and thirdly they are applied in an objectionable way and not in the spirit they might have been stipulated by you. Personally I have introduced the charkha in my home and it is plied every day. Still the bare requirements of clothes compel me to purchase from the market where the supply is getting dearer and rare. How do you justify the restrictions imposed on the private khadi producers who have been compelled to abandon their production ? "

There is a similar complaint from C. P. National Scouts. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was, as has been made clear by him, misreported. In common with the other believers in khadi, he thinks khadi to be a vital necessity till the country has attained its freedom. His doubt about its economic value has place, if at all, only when independence is achieved and industrialization on a vast scale takes place in the country. Surely no wise man will give up khadi now for the fear of being overwhelmed by industrialization which may or may not develop in India in the far-off future. The restrictions on private producers are intended as well in the interests of artisans, especially the spinners.

as the buyers. If they are removed, the market will be flooded with spurious khadi resulting in spinners being put out of work and the buyers being deceived. If there is irregularity in the working of the regulations, attention of the secretary should be at once drawn to it, and it will be set right without delay.

The increase in prices is the only question that demands satisfactory answer. It should be remembered that when khadi was not half as good as it is now and when there was much less variety it was much dearer than under the new scale, and there was hardly any complaint against the prices then ruling. Whilst the buyers have been benefiting all these many years, the spinners had till now practically no benefit whatsoever in the shape of rise in wages. They were dumb and helpless. They could not declare a strike against the Association. In the very nature of things they could not combine, being so scattered, for the betterment of wages or anything else. They were in such need of even *pies* that they could not make any effective protest. If now the conscience of a few of us has begun to rebel against the wretchedly low wage given to the spinners, we deserve help from the buyers who have hitherto enjoyed the privilege of reduction in prices. The difficulty of poor buyers is obvious. But the value of khadi lies in its social and moral value. If the khadi buyers understand the implications of khadi, they will not complain of rise in prices, if and when it is conclusively shown, as it can be in the present instance, to be due to the increase in the wages of the spinners concerned. If they have the will, they will discover many ways of making up for the increase they might have to bear in the purchase of khadi. But this they will do, if they have burnt their boats and resolved never to use any cloth other than khadi so long as they are in India. If they leave an escape-door, they will make use of it in emergency. Invention comes generally from necessity.

If the correspondents had made up their minds that for them there was no cloth other than khadi, they would not have written as they have done. But like the very large number who are no whit better off than these correspondents, they would have accommodated themselves to the slight increase that has taken place in the price of khadi.

At the same time let me comfort the correspondents by giving them the assurance that every care is being taken to make the increase as slight as possible for the poor lovers of khadi. Let them too peruse the reports from Rajendra Babu and the Secretary, A. I. S. A. Tamil Nad, on the great success that is attending the new experiment in giving unsolicited increase to spinners in their wages. If khadi lovers will have patience, they will find that, if the price of khadi has slightly increased, there has been a corresponding improvement in the quality and durability of khadi.

Harijan, 4-7-1936

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UNCERTIFIED v. CERTIFIED

The difficulty that cropped up in Tamil Nad on the introduction of the new scale of wages for spinning has arisen in other places and specially in Andhra, as appears from several letters I have received from that part of India. Correspondents complain bitterly of the harm uncertified dealers of khadi are doing to the cause of the poor women who have no chance of earning an additional pice. I do not know whether the uncertified dealers will listen to my exhortation not to be so selfish as to snatch the pices from thousands of poor spinners. I hope they will. But the real remedy lies in the hands of the khadi-buying public. If they will not buy khadi except from the bhandars certified by the A. I. S. A., the uncertified bhandars will have to close down. The public should realize that there can be no khadi if there is no A. I. S. A. Until khadi becomes current coin and has found general favour in the villages, it must be nursed by a vigilant body having the capacity for performing the onerous duty. Such a body is the A. I. S. A. The public know or ought to know that it is a purely philanthropic institution having no interest save that of the millions of poor women spinners of the villages of India. As its name implies all its activities are intended to subserve their interest. Economic salvation of the villages is impossible unless the millions of women who have no occupation for nearly six months in the year have a steady and profitable occupation fitted to their constitutions. There is no such universal occupation as hand-spinning. I have been obliged to restate this oft-told truth in order to

emphasize the necessity of the public patronizing certified khadi bhandars to the exclusion of uncertified ones, even though the latter sell khadi at less than the Association rates. The public should know that the Association rates alone make it possible to pay higher wages to spinners.

Harijan, 29-8-1936

SILK AND COTTON

There is a subtle rivalry going on just now between hand-manufactured silk and khadi hand-made from cotton. So far as the A. I. S. A. is concerned the matter was settled long ago. Certified khadi stores were permitted to stock indigenous silk cloth only to attract more customers for khadi and to enable the stores to make up somewhat for loss on khadi by charging fancy prices for silk cloth. The line was often overstepped by overzealous store-keepers, but never with the approval of the A. I. S. A. Now the manufacturers of silk cloth have discovered that they can easily displace Andhra khadi because they can afford to undersell Andhra saris, and now silk merchants are to be found defying the A. I. S. A. in pushing the wares. So far nothing can be said against these merchants, for no one is bound to respect the policy of the A. I. S. A. unless its virtue is recognized. But in Bombay as elsewhere too, perhaps, silk merchants have been found doing their business so as to lead the credulous public to believe that they, the merchants, are doing their business with the approval of the A. I. S. A. and in the interest of khadi.

It is necessary, therefore, to warn the public against being deceived by such devices. The public should know that the A. I. S. A. has adopted no arbitrary policy. Trade in indigenous silk had not died out when khadi revival was ushered in. Khadi can give employment to crores whereas silk hardly to more than a few thousand. Khadi is a necessity for both the poor and the rich. Silk is a necessity for none but a few who, in order to nourish a religious sentiment, insist on silk garments on certain occasions. Hence when it is a question of choice between silk and khadi, naturally those who have the welfare of starving millions at heart will always choose khadi.

And the very object of the All India Spinners' Association requires it to give the first place always to khadi made of cotton. I say khadi made of cotton in order to avoid confusion in the minds of those who have seen the wider definition of khadi as being cloth hand-spun and hand-woven out of cotton, silk or wool. This wide definition was and is necessary in order to cover woollen and silken hand-spuns when the latter two are used not to supplant cotton hand-spuns but to supplement them. Thus in winter many people want the warmer woollen or silken stuff.

No one need run away with the idea that the policy I have advocated in these lines disregards the welfare of silk spinners and weavers. Nothing can be farther from my thoughts than this. For I know that, if khadi dies, indigenous silk dies automatically. Japanese silk and the artificial imitation from the West will sweep every piece of indigenous cloth out of existence. It is the khadi spirit which has enabled Kashmir woollens and Bengal-Assam silks to hold their own. It is the far-seeing policy of the A. I. S. A. which, in protecting cotton khadi against all odds, automatically protects indigenous hand-spuns made of wool or silk. Put the three in competition with one another and you dig the grave of all the three. Lastly, let it be remembered that, if cotton khadi lives but silk dies, the hands left idle due to the death of silk can easily take up cotton spinning and weaving; but if silk displaces cotton, it cannot employ the crores that will be without occupation or chance of it due to the death of cotton khadi. It seems to me, therefore, to be the obvious duty of all lovers of Daridranarayan to prefer cotton khadi always when the question of making a choice confronts them. It will be economical in the long run to pay for the present dearer prices for fine cotton khadi than for the corresponding fine silk wear.

Harijan, 7-11-1936

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A RESTATEMENT OF FAITH

[If the speech at the opening of the exhibition on the 25th, simple enough as it was, baffled newspaper reporters (perhaps chiefly because they could not listen to him), the speech he made on the exhibition grounds on 27th December baffled them still more. Not because they could not listen to him. They listened to him, but they had heard nothing like it for many a long day, and it was so full and thorough and answered so many of the doubts, difficulties and objections raised regarding his constructive programme that some felt that it had other implications than the most obvious. In some quarters it was described as a most intriguing speech: it has been described as "an apology, a challenge and a revolutionary and electioneering speech all rolled into one"; and a newspaper stunt has given some colour to the impression that the speech was a clear indication that he was thinking of re-entering politics. No wonder that these fanciful interpretations should find themselves expressed in strange headlines like these: "Gandhi prepared to come back"; "I am powerful as ever and will prove it when time comes".

Well, the newspapers are not to blame. The speech was one of Gandhiji's many and unique spiritual efforts, and such do not easily lend themselves to being well reported. One may call it a political speech in the sense that he stated that the fourfold constructive programme of the Congress of 1920, if carried out in full, must result in Poorna Swaraj, and there was in the speech an appeal to fulfil the programme. It was certainly no fighting speech, and certainly had not a trace of the vulgarity that most electioneering harangues

have. It was spoken from the heart and addressed to the vast number of his co-workers in the field of constructive work who are often distracted by doubt, whom objections sometimes puzzle, and who quail before some of the difficulties of the situation. It was nothing more or less than a restatement of faith which grows brighter with increasing difficulties, and was intended to put heart into the army of workers who had dedicated themselves to the cause of his constructive programme of work. It was, I repeat, a spiritual discourse.

I was myself not confident of being able to do full justice to the utterance. I wrote it out in his own words, as they were spoken, and left it to him to summarize it himself. The result is an independent article written without the original in front of him. It amplifies some of the arguments and omits some portions that may be considered superfluous in cold print. Here then is Gandhiji's own version of the speech. M. D.]

Nothing New

I am going to say nothing new today. The cult of the spinning wheel is 18 years old. I said in 1918 that we could win Swaraj through the spinning wheel. My faith in the ability of the spinning wheel is as bright today as when I first declared it in 1918. It has become richer for the experience and experiment of all these years.

But you should know the implications of the wheel or khadi its product. It is not enough that one wears khadi on ceremonial occasions or even wears it to the exclusion of all other cloth, if he surrounds himself with Videshi in everything else. Khadi means the truest Swadeshi spirit, identification with the starving millions.

Let there be no mistake about my conception of Swaraj. It is complete independence of alien control and complete economic independence. So at one end

you have political independence, at the other economic. It has two other ends. One of them is moral and social, the corresponding end is Dharma, i. e. religion in the highest sense of the term. It includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., but is superior to them all. You may recognize it by the name of Truth, not the honesty of expedience, but the living Truth that pervades everything and will survive all destruction and all transformation. Moral and social uplift may be recognized by the term we are used to, i. e. non-violence. Let us call this the square of Swaraj, which will be out of shape if any of its angles is untrue. In the language of the Congress we cannot achieve this political and economic freedom without truth and non-violence in concrete terms, without a living faith in God, and hence moral and social elevation.

Political Independence

By political independence I do not mean an imitation of the British House of Commons, or the Soviet rule of Russia, or the Fascist rule of Italy, or the Nazi rule of Germany. They have systems suited to their genius. We must have ours suited to ours. What that can be is more than I can tell. I have described it as Ramraj, i. e. sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority. The Congress constitutions of Nagpur and Bombay, for which I am mainly responsible, are an attempt to achieve this type of Swaraj.

Then take economic independence. It is not a product of industrialization of the modern or the Western type. Indian economic independence means to me the economic uplift of every individual, male and female, by his or her own conscious effort. Under that system all men and women will have enough clothing—not the mere loin cloth, but what we understand by the term necessary articles of clothing—and enough food including milk and butter which are today denied to millions.

This brings me to socialism. Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught: "All land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line, and he can therefore unmake it." Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i. e. the people. That the land today does not belong to the people is too true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who have not lived up to it.

I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence. The most effective substitute for violent dispossession is the wheel with all its implications. Land and all property is his who will work it. Unfortunately the workers are or have been kept ignorant of this simple fact.

Let us now see how India came to be utterly impoverished. History tells us that the East India Company ruined the cotton manufacture and by all kinds of means made her dependent upon Lancashire for her cloth, the next great necessity of man. It is still the largest item of import. It thus created a huge army of partially unemployed men and women counted in millions, and gave them no other employment in return. With the destruction of hand ginning, carding, spinning and weaving to a certain extent, perished the other industries of India's villages. Continuous unemployment has induced in the people a kind of laziness which is most depressing. Thus whilst the alien rule is undoubtedly responsible for the growing pauperism of the people, we are more responsible for it. If the middle class people, who betrayed their trust and bartered away the economic independence of India for a mess of pottage, would now realize their error and take the message of the wheel to the villagers and induce them to shed their laziness and work at the wheel, we can ameliorate

the condition of the people to a great extent. It would be a terrible thing if laziness replaces industry and despair triumphs over hope.

Parliamentary Programme

The parliamentary programme is in the air. It has come to stay, and rightly. But it cannot bring us independence. Its function is strictly limited though quite necessary. Its success will prevent the Government from claiming that ordinance rule or any measure restricting our progress to the goal was sanctioned by popular representatives. Hence the necessity for voters voting for the Congress candidates, who dare not vote for unpopular measures without being liable to Congress discipline. The success of that programme may also bring some relief in individual cases such as the release of Shri Subhas Bose or the detenus. But that is not independence, political or economic.

Then look at it in another way. Only a limited number of men and women can become members of legislatures, say 1,500. How many from this audience can become legislators? And just now no more than 3½ crores can vote for these 1,500 members. What about the remaining 31½ crores? In our conception of Swaraj they are the real masters, and the 3½ crores are the former's servants who in their turn are masters of the 1,500. Thus the latter are doubly servants, if they will be true to their trust.

But the 31½ crores have also a trust to discharge towards themselves and the nation of which they as individuals are but tiny parts. And if they remain lazy, know nothing of Swaraj and how to win it, they will themselves become slaves of the 1,500 legislators. For my argument the 3½ crores of voters here belong to the same category as the 31½ crores. For, if they do not become industrious and wise, they will be so many pawns in the hands of 1,500 players; it is of little consequence whether they are Congressmen or otherwise. If the voters wake up only to register their votes

every three years or more and then go off to sleep, their servants will become their masters.

The only way I know to prevent such a catastrophe is for the 35 crores to be industrious and wise. This they can only be, if they will take up the spinning wheel and the other village industries. They will not take to them unintelligently. I can tell you from experience that the effort means adult education of the correct type, and requires possession of patience, moral fibre, and a scientific and practical knowledge of the industry the worker seeks to introduce in the village of his choice.

The Economic Solar System

In such a scheme the spinning wheel becomes its centre. If you call it the solar system, the wheel becomes the golden disc and the industries the planets revolving round it in obedience to the inviolable law of the system. When the Sun lost its illuminating power by the action of the East India Company, the planets lost their power and became invisible or almost so. The Sun is being reinstated in his past status now, and the planets are regaining their motion in exact proportion to the strength of the Sun.

Now perhaps you will understand the meaning and the message of the charkha. I said in 1920 that, if the Congress truly and successfully worked the programme laid down in 1920 including the fourfold constructive programme of khadi, communal unity, prohibition of intoxicants and removal by Hindus of untouchability, the attainment of Swaraj within a year was a certainty. I am neither sorry for nor ashamed of having made that declaration. I would like to repeat that declaration before you today. Whenever the fourfold programme is achieved in its fulness, you can have Swaraj for the asking. For you will then have attained the power to take it. Just think for a moment where the charkha stands today in your faith or action. Is the mutual secret assassination of Bombay a sign of

communal unity? Where is total prohibition? Have the Hindus rid themselves of untouchability root and branch? One swallow does not make a summer. Travancore's great proclamation may be the beginning of the end, but it is not the end. If we remove the untouchability of Harijans but treat Mussalmans or others as such, we have not removed the blot. 'All land belongs to God' has a deeper meaning. Like the earth we, of it, also belong to God, and hence we must all feel like one and not erect boundary walls and issue prohibition decrees against one another.

If We Fulfil the Constructive Programme —

This is the non-violent way in action. If we could fulfil this programme, there would be no need to offer civil disobedience, there would certainly be no need to do violence. Thirtyfive crores of people conscious of their numerical strength as one man would be ashamed of doing violence to 70,000 white men in India, no matter how capable they are of dealing destruction and administering poison gas to millions in a moment. The charkha understood intelligently can spin not only economic salvation but can also revolutionize our minds and hearts, and demonstrate to us that the non-violent approach to Swaraj is the safest and the easiest. Though the progress may seem slow, it will prove quickest in the long run.

Believe me, if Jawaharlal is not in jail today, it is not because he is afraid of it. He is quite capable of walking into prison doors as of mounting the gallows with a smile on his lips. I do not think I have lost the power or faith in the efficacy of such suffering. But there is no issue for it today as far as I can see. But what I feel is that all that suffering can be avoided if by united faith and will we achieve the constructive programme. If we can, I promise that we won't need to struggle with or against the British

nation, but Lord Linlithgow will come to us and own that he was mistaken in his disbelief of our non-violence and truth, and will undertake on behalf of his nation to abide by our decisions. Whether he does or not, I am working towards that end and no other.

All land belongs to God."

Harijan, 2-1-1937

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WHAT IS KHADI SCIENCE?

I have often said that, if khadi is a sound economic proposition, it is also a science and a romance. I believe there is a book called *The Romance of Cotton* wherein the origin of cotton has been traced and an attempt made to show how its discovery altered the course of civilization. Everything can be turned into a science or a romance if there is a scientific or a romantic spirit behind it. Some people scoff at khadi and betray signs of impatience or disgust when one talks of hand spinning. But it ceases to be an object of disgust or ridicule immediately you attribute to it the power of removing India-wide idleness, unemployment and consequent pauperism. It need not be, as a matter of fact, a panacea for the three ills. To be absorbingly interesting, the mere honest attributing of the power is enough. But you cannot attribute that potency to khadi and pursue it as some do in the manner of an ignorant needy artisan who gins, cards, spins or weaves because he must for his bread. A believer in its potency will pursue it in a deliberate, wise, methodical manner and in a scientific spirit, taking nothing for granted, testing every proposition, checking facts and figures, undaunted by defeats, unelated by petty successes, never satisfied till the goal is reached. The late Maganlal Gandhi had a living faith in the potency of khadi. It was for him a thrilling romance. And he wrote the elements of the science of khadi. No detail was too trifling for him, no scheme was too big for him. Richard Gregg had and has the same fire in him. He has given it a universal meaning. His *Economics of Khaddar* is an original contribution to the movement. He recognizes the spinning wheel as the symbol par

excellence of non-violence. It may or may not be all that. But their belief gave Maganlal Gandhi and gives Richard Gregg all the joy and pleasure derivable from any fascinating theme. A science to be science must afford the fullest scope for satisfying the hunger of body, mind and soul. Sceptics have wondered how khadi can afford such satisfaction or, in other words, what I mean when I use the expression 'science of khadi'. I cannot better answer the question than by copying below the questions framed by me hurriedly for a khadi worker who offered to be examined by me. The questions were neither framed in their logical sequence nor were they exhaustive. They admit of rearrangement and addition. But I reproduce a translation, made for me by a friend, of the original in Hindustani.

PART I

1. How much cotton is produced in India and where? Name the varieties. How much remains in India, how much is spun by hand, how much goes to England and other lands?

2. (a) What quantity of cloth is manufactured in Indian mills? How much of it is used in India and how much is exported?

(b) Of the above how much is manufactured from swadeshi mill yarn, and how much from foreign mill yarn?

(c) How much cloth is imported?

(d) What quantity of khadi is produced in India?

Note: Give your answers in square yards and in terms of money.

3. Discuss the merits and demerits of the three kinds of cloth above mentioned.

4. Some say khadi is dear, coarse, and not lasting. Give your answers to these complaints, and where there is foundation for any of them offer your solution.

5. In the (A. I. S. A.) khadi work how many spinners are engaged? How much have they earned during all these years? Give the number of mill spinners and their total annual earnings.

6. (a) How is the work of the A. I. S. A. carried on? How much is spent by them on administration?

(b) What staff is employed in the running of a swadeshi mill, and what proportion of wages do such persons get in comparison with the mill hands?

7. (a) What place, in your opinion, does clothing occupy in the necessaries of life?

(b) Name the chief necessaries of life and give their proportionate percentages.

8. If everyone in India gave up wearing mill-made cloth, whether foreign or Indian, how much money would remain in India and to whom would it go?

9. What does India export in place of the cloth she imports? What loss, if any, does India sustain through this exchange?

10. What percentage of the population is able to buy cloth?

11. What is the percentage of those who have the leisure to make their own cloth? And how?

12. "Khadi will establish perfect economic balance." Is this statement really correct? Give reasons for your answer.

13. If khadi became universal, what effect would this have on trade, occupation and transport, and in what manner?

14. Assuming that for another 50 years khadi does not become universal, what is likely to be the effect on the economic condition of our people?

PART II

1. Give a description of current Indian spinning wheels. Which is the best amongst them? Give drawings of any four spinning wheels and the correct measurement of each constituent part. State the species

of wood employed, the length and the girth of the spindle, and the thickness of the *mal.*

2. Compare the current charkhas with the Yeravda wheel in the matter of speed, cost and general advantages.

3. How would you ascertain the variety of cotton, the strength of the yarn, and the count of spun yarn ?

4. Of what count and strength is the yarn you spin ? What is your speed on the takli and the wheel ? Which wheel do you generally use ?

5. How much cloth does a man and a woman require respectively for his or her clothing ? How much yarn is required for making the same, and how much time is necessary for spinning it ?

6. How much yarn is required to clothe one family ? How much cotton is needed to produce the above ? How much land is required for growing the necessary amount of cotton ?

(A family consists of a father, mother and three children — one girl and two boys, 7, 5 and 3 years old.)

7. Compare the current carding bow with the new ones. How much do you card per hour ? How can you judge whether the cotton is properly carded or not ? How long does it take you to make one pound of slivers ? How many slivers do you make from one tola of cotton ?

8. How much cotton can you gin in one hour ? Compare ginning by hand with ginning by machine, giving the respective merits and demerits of either process. Describe and give a drawing of the current hand ginning machine.

9. Give the length of the yarn of 20 counts required to weave one yard of cloth 36 inches wide. How many hands are required to weave the same ?

10. Compare the pit loom with the shuttle loom.

Harijan, 16-1-1937

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WHAT KHADI WORKERS SHOULD KNOW

In a previous article I have tried to explain what should be covered by the science of khadi. In my opinion it should be made obligatory on every khadi worker engaged in any of the production centres of the A. I. S. A. to know the elements of this science. Shri Lakshmidas is a khadi lover and one of the most careful students of the science of khadi that we have. But I would not call even him a master of the science. In the course of a letter which he addressed me in November 1936, he laid down what he considered to be the minimum test which every khadi worker ought to satisfy. The test is reproduced below:

1. The worker should know how to distinguish between superior and inferior grades of cotton, cotton-seed and lint.

2. He should be able to fix in position the rolling pin of a hand-ginning machine and to make the necessary correction and adjustment to make it exactly fit with the fixed roller, when the former happens to be bent or of unequal thickness.

3. He should be able to fit up a carding bow and to prepare the gut and the hide piece for the shoulder-blade.

4. He should be able to show a ginning speed of five pounds an hour on a hand-ginning machine over a period of four hours.

5. He must show a carding speed of ten tolas of cotton wool per hour, excluding the time required for making slivers.

6. He must know the construction of every type of spinning wheel and how to assemble it. He must be able to straighten a spindle gone out of shape and

to prepare the *mal*, and the *daman*, the cross bands of the motor wheel.

7. He must be able to maintain a spinning speed of 300 rounds (400 yards) of yarn of 20*s*, with a tensile strength of over 80% and evenness 95% in a four hours' test.

8. He should know the Andhra process of spinning and must be able to spin 200 rounds of 70*s* to 80*s*, strength 80% and evenness 95%, during a two hours' test.

9. He should know the construction of a pit loom as well as a fly-shuttle loom and be able to prepare together the reeds, the healds and the sizing brush.

10. He should be able to weave khadi of 50" width on a fly-shuttle loom from yarn of 20*s*, and to make all necessary adjustments to produce at least five different kinds of border designs for saris.

11. The speed of weaving should come up to one square yard in an hour from yarn of 20*s*.

12. He should know all about the growing of different varieties of cotton, and should be able to get hand-gins, carding bows, spinning wheels, looms, and their accessories locally prepared, preferably out of local material. This would involve a knowledge of:

(a) Rainfall, its extent and distribution over different parts of the year, and a knowledge of manures and the nature of the soil.

(b) Different kinds of wood and of calculations relating to measurement.

(c) A workable knowledge of drawing for the above-mentioned needs.

13. A knowledge of carpentry sufficient for repairing the various machines.

It is not quite easy to fulfil this test. But given sufficient earnestness and measure of diligence, anyone who has had a fair education in this should be able to satisfy Shri Lakshmidas's test. That would, however, still leave uncovered the commercial aspects

of the science of khadi. That is covered by the questions drawn up by me. The syllabus prepared by Shri Lakshmidas is calculated to cover the technical side. One must be an adept in both these fields before he can be said to be versed in the elements of the science of khadi. I shall feel thankful if such khadi workers as may happen to read this article, and can satisfy the technical or the commercial test or both, will send me their full names and addresses. Similarly those who are eager to qualify themselves in the elementary science of khadi should also communicate with me. Unluckily today we have no suitable text-books that can be used to impart the required knowledge. The only available book that somewhat answers the purpose is that by the late Shri Maganlal Gandhi. But even that book is now out of date owing to the advance that the science of khadi has made since that book was written. A revised edition of that book is therefore urgently needed. That can come about only if we have lovers of khadi who would devote themselves to the revision and have the leisure for the work.

Harijan, 13-2-1937

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HOW TO BEGIN

My invitation in these columns some time back to such khadi workers as may be anxious to become adepts in the various processes relating to the production of khadi, has evoked a wide response and I have already received several communications on the subject. The object of the following remarks is to set forth a few practical hints for the guidance of these friends.

The first essential condition for anyone who wants to become master of any subject is to have a living faith in it. He must next have the eagerness to learn and readiness to make the necessary sacrifice for its sake. Books, teachers and other accessories of education are of course necessary in a more or less degree, but passion for knowledge and eagerness to learn are the most essential of all. Given these, the other things will follow of themselves. I would therefore suggest to these intending students of the khadi science that they can at once make a beginning by finding out what processes relative to khadi production are being carried out in their immediate neighbourhood, and picking up all the useful information with regard to them available there. The main task that faces a student of the khadi science today is collation and co-ordination of personal experience. A number of different processes relating to the production of khadi are today in vogue in different parts of the country. But there is no single person today who fully knows all of them. And yet a complete, detailed knowledge of all these different processes is necessary before the science of khadi can be developed. The task is obviously beyond the compass of a single individual. But if there are a number of persons who are truly

fired by a scientific spirit of research and they apply themselves to the task in a systematic manner, they will by pooling their talents and experience be able to evolve a living, growing science of khadi in a short time. But before they can do that, they will need to have themselves collectively mastered all the processes of khadi production that are in vogue in the country today.

To take a concrete instance, several varieties of khadi are produced in different parts of Andhra today, employing different methods of carding. Now any khadi worker in Andhra who is anxious to acquire the science of khadi can begin by mastering all these various methods. For this he need not quit his province. Let him by way of a start pick up the process which is current in his immediate neighbourhood. A scientific study of carding would, of course, include a knowledge of the construction of the carding bow on the part of the student. He would further need to know the materials from which the gut string and other component parts of a carding bow are made and how; what exactly the length of a carding bow should be in order to yield the best results, and the effects of departure from the standard length; where precisely the stroke on the bow-string should be delivered, and the reason why, and so on in respect of a host of other questions about which even the best of our professional carders today know little and care even less. Similarly, with regard to cotton a worker who takes up a study of carding as a science would need to know all about the different varieties of cotton; the length, strength and fineness of their respective fibres, the various processes through which it has to pass before it reaches his hands; where is it grown; what is the yield per acre and the total money value of the crop; what is the extent of the area under cotton; what was the crop grown there previously which has been displaced, or was the area

under question lying fallow before; what difference would it make to the cultivator if another crop were substituted in place of cotton; etc. Thus his practical experience will be illumined by scientific knowledge and give him such a firm grip of his subject and an insight into its intricacies that to master the other processes of carding prevailing in different parts of Andhra will become comparatively an easy thing for him and take but little time. If, further, he keeps regular notes of his experiments and experiences, they will in time take the place of an authoritative treatise on the science of carding.

It will be thus seen that no khadi worker need leave his field of work in order to learn the science of khadi. If he is fired by the spirit of inquiry and has patience and capacity for concentrated application in a sufficient measure, he will, by applying himself to an intensive study of the processes for which his neighbourhood offers special facilities, not only become a specialist in those particular processes but also gradually widen the scope of his knowledge so as to deserve the name science.

Harijan, 10-4-1937

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KHADI IN SWADESHI EXHIBITIONS

In all other parts of India where Swadeshi exhibitions permitting mill cloth are held the A. I. S. A. has as a rule refused to exhibit khadi; and the rule has answered the purpose for which it was framed. From U. P., however, the pressure has come to relax the rule. But I have hitherto resisted the temptation. U. P. khadi workers made a special reference for their guidance. They are almost all Congressmen no less ardent than the others, but they have dedicated themselves to the Congress service through its constructive and the most difficult programme, khadi. Appreciating their difficulty I referred the question to Shri Jawaharlal Nehru for his opinion. I have received the following reply from him:

> "I have your letter of the 5th March enquiring about khadi at exhibitions. This matter has been repeatedly discussed by us in the course of the past year ever since my return from Europe. The U. P. Provincial Congress Committee organized one or two exhibitions two or three years back. Since then they have not repeated this. But occasionally some of our district committees organize exhibitions. Even this has grown rarer now. Exhibitions organized by Swadeshi Sabhas, however, continue. Last November the Allahabad Swadeshi League had their annual exhibition. As usual they exhibited mill cloth. They wanted me to open the exhibition. For several months I refused to agree because of this khadi matter. Ultimately, however, I agreed to do so for various reasons, chiefly local. I felt that my refusal would be misinterpreted and would do us some injury. In my opening speech there I dealt largely with this question of khadi.

The question you have put is not easy to answer. The average khadi worker seems to be of opinion that khadi should not be exhibited if mill cloth is allowed there. Other Congress workers are usually of a contrary opinion on the ground that at such exhibitions there is usually a good sale of khadi. Obviously the opinion of the khadi worker, who is presumed to be an expert at his job and who is anxious to push khadi, should be almost final. I would therefore hesitate to give my decision against him unless I succeed in convincing him. I imagine that from a certain long distance view it is better even to incur some loss now so as to avoid producing any confusion in the public mind as to what khadi is and what it is not. This can only be done by adherence to the present policy of banning certified khadi sales in such exhibitions.

At the same time I find that uncertified khadi is sold at such exhibitions and plenty of people patronize it. There are quite large numbers of people, as you know, who are not particularly keen on buying certified khadi, but who are prepared to do so if it comes their way. The point is: are we to cater for the people in any especial measure, or are we to concentrate on holding fast to those who desire to use pure khadi only? This question has not only its business side but its psychological side also. Khadi has on the one hand built up a firm foundation for itself, and there is a body of men in the country who must have pure khadi whatever the cost or the trouble. At the same time khadi does not spread as rapidly as it ought among other classes who only occasionally patronize it. For khadi workers the object should be to develop the khadi habit in the latter. That habit comes largely from appeals to the mind or heart and partly from sheer habit. Ordinarily speaking it would be a good thing to have as many casual purchasers as possible so that they may

get used to buying and wearing khadi and thus develop the real habit. The present policy to some extent keeps away this casual purchaser and thus reduces the field from which regular khadi buyers might be drawn.

In regard to these exhibitions there is another difficulty. Often enough there is no real supervision over the stuffs that come in, and textiles made of foreign yarn are taken, or even some stuffs which are largely foreign and have just a bit of Indian material and work on them. This may perhaps be got over with a more stringent control. But the usual Swadeshi League Committee is not frightfully keen over this matter.

Swadeshi exhibitions often raise other issues also which cannot be ignored. For instance, last year I decided to open it because I felt that any other decision on my part would have given rise to some trouble and bitterness and thus would have come in the way of our work.

Therefore, if you want my final opinion, I cannot give it very definitely, and because of my not being so definite I must respect the opinions of others who are working for khadi. I am, however, inclined to think that it might be preferable to allow khadi to be exhibited and sold in these exhibitions under certain conditions which would prevent as far as possible (1) something else being mistaken for khadi and the distinction between khadi and mill cloth being clearly preserved; (2) the exclusion of partly foreign stuffs from the exhibition."

In the absence of final opinion which he is unable to give, he would respect the opinions of others who are working for khadi. He is, however, "inclined to think that it might be preferable to allow khadi to be exhibited and sold in these exhibitions." My own experience, however, tells me that it is dangerous to befog the mass mind by putting khadi in juxtaposition

with the gaudy mill-made cloth. It is very like putting human beings side by side with robots. Human beings may be worsted in the competition if they allow themselves to be compared to robots. Even so will khadi fare, in comparison with mill-made cloth. The planes of the two are different. Aims are opposite. Khadi gives work to all, mill cloth gives work to some and deprives many of honest labour. Khadi serves the masses, mill cloth is intended to serve the classes. Khadi serves labour, mill cloth exploits it. My experience is backed by that of the khadi workers throughout India. I hope, therefore, that with Shri Jawaharlal Nehru the Congressmen of U. P. will respect the experience and the policy of the A. I. S. A. in preference to their own opinion if it be against that of the A. I. S. A.

Harijan, 10-4-1937

SPINNERS' WAGES

The Council of the A. I. S. A. passed the following important resolutions at its meeting at Wardha on the 23rd and 24th ultimo:

> "This Council notes with great satisfaction that the new mode of giving progressively increased wages to spinners and other low-paid artisans, resulting in the rise of spinners' wages, has on the whole succeeded beyond the expectations of the majority of khadi workers. The Council advises those provincial branches, who have confidence, to submit proposals for further rise in wages with a view to early enforcement."
>
> "The Council also resolved to utilize the surplus, accruing on account of increase in prices on the introduction of the new scheme last year, for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of spinners and other artisans by supplying them more efficient spinning wheels and other necessary implements and accessories, and also for preparing instructors by imparting scientific training to them in the necessary processes of their work. The Central Office at Ahmedabad is to take effective steps in this direction, and the provincial branches have been requested to submit their proposals of work as early as possible."

When the scheme was inaugurated many workers had grave doubts about its success. They had thought that the consequent rise in the price of khadi would adversely affect the sales. Experience has dispelled the fears, and the Council is anxious to take a further step forward, if it can at all be taken, at an early date. Whilst, therefore, there need be no haste about taking the further step, workers may not be lazy

about it either. They should know that the goal is eight annas per day of eight hours. We have only nominally reached three annas which are evenly distributed between increase and efficiency. The efficiency earnings do not directly affect the sale price. If anything, the efficiency of spinners improves the quality of khadi. The direct increase in the wages undoubtedly raises the prices, but its burden is broken by the improvement in quality. Then the increase is so judiciously regulated as to affect the poorest buyer not at all or very slightly. I have no manner of doubt that, if only the workers will themselves be more efficient, more vigilant and more faithful, they will hasten the day when spinners can easily earn eight annas per day of eight hours' work without involving a phenomenal rise in the sale price. More scientific knowledge must improve the capacity of hand gins, carding bows and spinning wheels. Great observation of spinners' work must result in their being more skilled and more efficient. Greater grasp of administrative detail and greater faithfulness must mean a substantial decrease in overhead charges. In other words, our ignorance of the science of khadi is at the bottom of our present inability to reach the goal of eight annas per day. The resolution is intended as a spur to effort. God helps only the ever-watchful.

Harijan, 17-4-1937

THE PROBLEM OF THE HAND-LOOM

The following figures represent the aggregate outturn of hand-looms using both indigenous and foreign mill yarn up to 1934:

Year	Average outturn of cloth in hundred thousand yards
1911–14	101
1921–24	117
1925–28	124
1930	134
1931	134
1932	140
1933	172
1934	170

It is difficult to say how far these figures are reliable. But I think it may safely be assumed that, if they err at all, it is on the side of understatement. The actual production of the hand-looms is probably higher. We ought to be able to convert all these hand-looms to the use of hand-spun yarn, but we are powerless to do that today. Our charkha yarn today is neither of sufficient strength, nor is it produced in sufficient quantity. So long as we cannot produce hand-spun yarn that will stand comparison with the mill yarn in strength and uniformity, the hand-loom weaver will refuse to handle it and for very good reason too. In the first place, the employment of weak and uneven yarn reduces the quantity of cloth that he can turn out in a given time, and thus affects his earning capacity. Secondly, the hand-loom weaver today has specialized more or less in higher lines of production while our output of hand-spun yarn of a

fine count is extremely meagre, and that too is confined mostly to Andhra. The solution of the difficulty involves a complete mastery of the khadi science. But I am not asking anybody to tackle this problem today. It can for the present wait. There are a number of other problems which will have to be successfully tackled before we can cope with the question of the hand-loom. Only let it be borne in mind that this problem will have to be successfully tackled before the dream of universalizing khadi is realized.

Harijan, 17-4-1937

INDIAN INDUSTRY

The question is often asked what is Indian industry? It is asked generally regarding Indian exhibitions. Formerly it used to be claimed that any industry that was conducted in India was an Indian industry. Thus a mill manned by non-domiciled Europeans bringing capital, skilled man-power, and machinery from abroad was considered to be an Indian industry even though it could be proved to be harmful to the masses. From that we have travelled a long distance. An industry to be Indian must be demonstrably in the interest of the masses; it must be manned by Indians both skilled and unskilled. Its capital and machinery should be Indian, and the labour employed should have a living wage and be comfortably housed, while the welfare of the children of the labourers should be guaranteed by the employers. This is an ideal definition. Only the A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A. can perhaps barely satisfy that definition. For even these Associations have much leeway to make up. Nevertheless complete conformation to the definition is their immediate goal.

But between the definition and the one that was the vogue with the Congress before 1920 there are many shades of definitions. The Congress definition has generally been all goods other than mill cloth manufactured in India. The great mill industry may generally be claimed to be an Indian industry. But, in spite of its ability to compete with Japan and Lancashire, it is an industry that exploits the masses and deepens their poverty in exact proportion to its success over khadi. In the modern craze for wholesale industrialization, my presentation has been ques-

tioned, if not brushed aside. It has been contended that the growing poverty of the masses, due to the progress of industrialization, is inevitable, and should therefore be suffered. I do not consider the evil to be inevitable, let alone to be suffered. The A. I. S. A. has successfully demonstrated the possibility of the villages manufacturing the whole of the cloth requirement of India simply by employing the leisure hours of the nation in spinning and the anterior processes. The difficulty lies in weaning the nation from the use of mill cloth. This is not the place to discuss how it can be done. My purpose in this note was to give my definition of Indian industry in terms of the millions of villagers, and my reasons for that definition. And it should be plain to everyone that national exhibitions should only be for those industries which need public support in every way, not those which are flourshing without the aid of exhibitions and the like, and which organize their own exhibitions.

Harijan, 23-10-1937

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF KHADI

[It was in that spirit of self-introspection that Gandhiji poured himself out at the exhibition on the morning of the 16th. The voice had not the pitch and timbre that his voice had on the day he delivered himself of a spiritual oration at Faizpur on the 25th of December 1936, but it had the same solemnity, the same spiritual fervour, the same appeal made more irresistible by the foreboding that it may be stilled in a near rather than a remote future. M. D.]

"The U. P. and the Bihar Ministers are here having tendered their resignations. There is nothing very extraordinary about that. They accepted their offices in full knowledge of the fact that the Constitution is a bauble. What has happened in Bihar and U. P. may happen tomorrow in Bombay and the day after in Madras. But I am going to tell you today why exactly the thing has happened. If I am a Minister, it is within my power to release prisoners, no matter whether they are three or thirty. What right has the Governor to interfere? I am Minister because I have the majority of votes, and so long as I hold the office, there is no one to question my authority to release the prisoners. But the Governors of two provinces have interfered. Let me tell you why. *Pace* what the Socialist friends may say, I hold that the Governors dared to interfere because we have not realized the implications of khadi.

Khadi has been conceived as the foundation and the image of ahimsa. A real khadi-wearer will not utter an untruth. A real khadi-wearer will harbour no violence, no deceit, no impurity. To those who will say, 'If this is khadi, we will not wear it,' I

will say, 'You are welcome to do what you like, but then you must forget to win Swaraj by means of truth and non-violence. Nor may I compel you to observe truth and non-violence, nor may I compel you to win Swaraj after my method.'

Seven and a half lakh have gone into the making of Vithalnagar. There are many things here I have liked, but it lacks the spirit of khadi. The Sardar and I are close to each other, we are as one, we work alike and we think alike, but it may be that even the Sardar has not fully grasped the secret of khadi. Where there is the conscious endeavour to fulfil the spirit of khadi, there is no place for the expenditure of seven and a half lakh. I said that we should be able to hold a village session at the outside expense of Rs. 5,000. Before the Faizpur Congress I told Deo that he would be found wanting in my estimate if he failed to manage it with Rs. 5,000. Well, the idea has still not left my mind. If we cannot do this, we are not true soldiers of Swaraj, we have not become real villagers. Rural-mindedness and electrical illuminations go ill together. Nor have motor cars and motor lorries any place there. They took me to Faizpur and they brought me to Haripura in a car. They would not allow me to foot it out. They would not even take me in a bullock cart. That was reserved for Subhas Babu. If they had brought me in a bullock cart, it would have meant some loss of time. But how does that matter? We have all become princes, and I am told some pedestrians waylaid cars and threatened satyagraha if they were not given cars. The seven lakhs would not have been spent here, if we were khadi-minded. Here there are petrol and oil engines and water-pipes, stoves and electricity, most of the modern city-dwellers' amenities, including the tooth paste and the tooth brush and scented hair-oils. The villager is or should be unspoilt by these things. His brush

is the fresh babul stick, and his powder is salt and charcoal. You wear khadi, but what about the other things that surround you and are out of keeping with khadi ?

Because we have not assimilated and lived the *mantra* of khadi, some socialist friends are impatient with us and say that Gandhi's days are gone and a new age is upon us. I do not mind this; in fact I welcome plain-spokenness. If you think that what I say deserves to be rejected, do by all means reject it. Do what you do for the sake of India, not for my sake. I am but an image of clay, which is sure to be reduced to cinders. If you wear khadi for my sake, you will burn khadi on the day you burn my dead body. But if you have fully understood the message of khadi, if you have thoroughly assimilated it, khadi will long outlive me. Khadi is not a lifeless image to be worshipped externally. Proper worship is not image worship, it is the worship of God in the image. If we miss the spirit of khadi and make only a fetish of it, we are no better than gross idolaters.

For twenty years I have preached the cult of khadi to my countrymen. I want to preach the same cult today when I am at death's door. Khadi is no longer the old tattered rag it looked like when it was born. It has all the health and beauty and vigour of youth, and I can therefore preach the cult of khadi with redoubled faith and vigour. Something within me tells me that herein I am not wrong. In khadi lies Swaraj — Independence."

Harijan, 26-2-1938

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SWADESHI INDUSTRIES AND DISCRIMINATION

The discrimination clauses in the new Constitution have been the subject of much discussion of late, and naturally so. For that is one of the many vicious features of the new Constitution which make Federation unacceptable. There would seem to be no doubt about what Gandhiji meant when he insisted on the insertion of the words 'in the intrests of India' in the Agreement which is now known as the Irwin-Gandhi Pact. An automatic commentary on the words was provided by the clause in the Agreement granting the right of Indians to picket all forgein cloth shops. Does the exclusion of all foreign cloth, which necessarily includes British cloth, mean discrimination against the British cloth manufacturers? Lord Irwin did not think so. In the same way about all other industries which were killed or nearly killed in order that the British industries may be reared on their ruin. In fact a friend draws my attention to the fact that, whilst Lord Irwin recognized the principle in 1931, it was recognized as long ago as 1916 by Sir William Clarke, the then member for Commerce and Industry of the Government of India. In supporting the resolution for the appointment of an Industrial Commission, he said: "The building up of industries where the capital, control and management should be in the hands of Indians is the special object we all have in view;" and he viewed with disfavour a situation created by "the manufacturer who now competes with you from a distance," transferring "his activities to India and competes with you within your own country."

To make the whole thing clear once for all and to have Gandhiji's authoritative opinion on this matter and his definition of Swadeshi industries, three representatives of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company had an interview with him at Sevagram some days ago. They seemed to be worried by the following among a number of things :

1. The discrimination clauses. They cited from Gandhiji's article in *Young India* entitled *The Giant and the Dwarf* the following statements :

"To talk of no discrimination between Indian interests and English or European is to perpetuate Indian helotage. What is equality of rights between a giant and a dwarf? Before one can think of equality between unequals, the dwarf must be raised to the height of the giant. . . . It will be a misnomer to call the process one of racial discrimination. There is no such question. There is room enough in our country for every British man, woman and child, if they will shed their privileged position and share our lot." And again : "In almost every walk of life the Englishman by reason of his belonging to the ruling class occupies a privileged position. It can be said without fear of contradiction and without exaggeration that he has risen upon the ruin of India's commerce and industries. The cottage industries of India had to perish in order that Lancashire might flourish. The Indian shipping had to perish, so that British shipping might flourish."

Is the shipping not to revive and rise to its full height in a free India?

2. What are Indian or Swadeshi companies? It has become a fashion nowadays to bamboozle the unwary public by adding "(India) Limited" to full-blooded British concerns. Lever Brothers "(India) Limited" have their factories here now. They claim to produce Swadeshi soap, and have already ruined several large and small soap factories in Bengal. Then

there is the Imperial Chemicles " (India) Ltd. " which has received valuable concessions. This is dumping foreign *industries* instead of foreign *goods* on us.

3. Then there are companies with Indian Directorate with British Managing Agents who direct the Directorate. Would you call a company with a large percentage of Indian capital and a large number of Indian Directors on the Board, but with a non-Indian Managing Director or non-Indian firm as Managing Agents, a Swadeshi concern?

Gandhiji dealt with these points fairly exhaustively in his reply which may be summarized below in his own words:

" 1. On this point I am glad you have reminded me of my article written in 1931. I still hold the same views, and have no doubt that a Free India will have the right to discriminate — if that word must be used — against foreign interests wherever Indian interests need it.

" 2. As regards the definition of a Swadeshi company, I would say that only those concerns can be regarded as Swadeshi whose control, direction and management either by a Managing Director or by Managing Agents are in Indian hands. I should have no objection to the use of foreign capital, or to the employment of foreign talent, when such are not available in India, or when we need them, — but only on the condition that such capital and such talents are exclusively under the control, direction and management of Indians and are used in the interests of India.

" But the use of foreign capital or talent is one thing, and the dumping of foreign industrial concerns is totally another thing. The concerns you have named cannot in the remotest sense of the term be called Swadeshi. Rather than countenance these ventures, I would prefer the development of the industries in question to be delayed by a few years in order

to permit national capital and enterprise to grow up and build such industries in future under the actual control, direction and management of Indians themselves.

"3. Answer to this is contained in my answer on the second point."

M. D.

Harijan, 26-3-1938

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A FALLACY

An A. I. S. A. agent asks what he is to say to his co-workers who have formed a union and presented him with terms. I regard the formation of such unions a fallacy. The workers have evidently missed the scope and the message of the A. I. S. A. It is a philanthropic organization formed by the Congress and has been given an autonomous charter for the specific purpose of developing the central village industry of hand-spinning and all it implies. Those who are engaged in this voluntary organization not only derive no pecuniary advantage from it but are expected, if they can, to give their labour free of any hire. And since in this the poorest country in the world many persons cannot do so, a large number are paid an emolument only enough to sustain them. Whilst every attempt is made to make them comfortable, they are not regarded as employees in the ordinary sense. There are no profits shared by anyone. If there are share-holders or proprietors, they are the spinners, weavers and the like. Even the consumers are not beneficiaries. They are expected to wear khadi not because it is cheaper or better to look at than mill cloth, but because it gives employment to the largest number of half-starved half-employed persons, mostly women. The whole of the takings go to these dumb artisans after deducting the salaries and other expenses incurred in running this vast philanthropic organization.

If, therefore, any body of workers form unions as against the Association, they are against the artisans. What they take, has to come out of the pockets of the artisans or the consumers. It would be manifestly absurd to tax the consumers in the interest

of the workers. Will they, the workers, not realize that the agents are themselves as much workers as they themselves? In several cases the agents are purely honorary. It is of course a different thing where an agent is found to be going beyond his sphere of duty and acting as if he was the lord and master of, instead of being co-worker with, the men working with and under him. In such a case the workers have their remedy through the central office but surely not through unions after the orthodox style. In the one case they are a necessity, in the other they are not only superfluous, but they are, as I have said above, a fallacy and, if persisted in on a wide scale, they may kill the Association of which they are part creators and trustees.

Harijan, 16-7-1938

DUTY OF KHADI WEARERS

I have before me several letters, some protesting against the constant rise in the prices of khadi, and some piteously appealing to me to show the way to poor middle class people for buying dear khadi.

The A. I. S. A. exists only for the betterment of the khadi producers, the majority of whom are poor women spinners. I hold that the Association cannot be satisfied till every woman who puts in an honest hour in spinning gets one anna per hour. We are on the point of reaching half an anna per hour, and, if the consumers and the Congress Governments do their duty, the Association expects to give the anna per hour much earlier than most people expect.

This must mean some rise in the price of khadi, but not a proportionate rise. City people should know that ceaseless effort is being made to evoke greater skill among the artisans so that the whole of the increase in the wages may not fall upon khadi. Overhead charges are also being constantly reduced. Skill overhead increases with experience. But sixteen times increase in the wages of spinners cannot all be brought about merely by increased efficiency. Therefore some rise in the price of khadi is inevitable with the increase in the wages. This is being unequally distributed among the different varieties so that the heaviest rise will take place in the khadi that is purchased by the monied classes. Everything that can be done to ease the burden on poor buyers is being done and will be done by the Association.

But khadi wearers should know that the economics of khadi are different from the ordinary economics which are based on competition in which patriotism,

sentiment and humanity play little or no part. Khadi economics are based on patriotism, sentiment and humanity.

Before the new policy of the Association was laid down, its aim was to cheapen khadi, mostly in disregard of the wages of the spinners, the most helpless artisans perhaps in the world. This continued for nearly a decade. It was a mistaken policy, but the mistake was unconscious and based on faulty reasoning. I must take the largest share of the blame for the mistake. Khadi wearers had the sole benefit of the mistake. Is it right for them to complain when the mistake is being repaired and the spinners are gradually being paid what is their due?

The Association has expected hearty co-operation from the khadi wearers, and I am glad to be able to say that on the whole the increase in the price of khadi has not been resented by them. Many consider it a privilege that they are partners in the tardy justice that is being done to the dumb sisters whose need is infinitely greater than that of the wearers of khadi.

I know that there are many middle class persons who find it difficult to make the two ends meet, and for them every additional anna becomes a problem. And they will not spin. They have my sympathy. But they cannot have it both ways. If they will not spin, they should cut down their requirements or reduce other expenses. In this climate we do not need the clothes we use. Where there is a will there is a way.

A correspondent suggests that khadi is mainly supported by the poor middle class, and contends that, if the prices are not brought down to the level at which they can buy it, it will not survive me. If that is the condition on which alone khadi can live, it deserves to predecease me. Happily there is a fallacy behind the argument. The question of cheapness mainly affects the city-dwellers. If all of them, rich

and poor, took to khadi, they could hardly use more than ten per cent of the possible production of khadi. The rest has to be used by the producers themselves who are villagers. The question of price does not affect them materially, if at all. It is true that khadi has not penetrated the villages to the extent expected. During the transition period, therefore, it has to depend upon the patriotic spirit of city-dwellers both rich and poor. Those who believe in the message of khadi will not consider any price too dear for khadi. It is the only real insurance against famine and unemployment. Even if India were to be industrialized overnight, much of the unemployment would remain. In this country the problem is to find work for a whole nation which has one-fourth of her time without occupation. If pestilence, poverty and bloodshed are to be avoided, there is no remedy but khadi and other village industries. Those who believe in this mission of khadi and who believe also in a living wage being paid to the spinners, will not grudge the increase that has to be made in the price of khadi. They may rely upon the Association moving with the utmost caution. The past two years' experience warrants the hope that the public welcome the increase in the wages that the spinners are receiving.

Harijan, 23-7-1938

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HOW TO SAVE HAND-LOOM WEAVERS

The statement that the hand-loom industry has defied mill competition is only partially true. There are not today half as many hand-loom weavers as there were, say, twentyfive years ago. There was a time when, as the spinning wheel spun the whole of the yarn required by the nation, the hand-loom wove all the cloth required. When the mills were established the spinning wheel all but died out for the very simple reason that it gave a paltry return and was never a whole-time occupation. But the loom offered stubborn resistance, for the reason, among others, that it was a full-time occupation by itself and paid the weaver enough to eke out a living. When the spinning mill came, the weaver fell back upon it for his hanks of yarn. He even welcomed the change because he could get more evenly spun and stronger yarn. Little did he know that he was to become perfectly helpless if the mills for any reason could not supply him with yarn. Unlike the village spinner the mill-owner dictated the price of his yarn. By and by the weaver who wove simple, patternless khadi could not withstand the mill competition, and he died. And for the past few years the weaver of fancy cloth has felt the pressure from weaving mills. Public taste is slowly but surely changing. If the mills cannot exactly copy the patterns woven by the village weaver, they can, as they do, produce new patterns and by efficient advertising attract customers. Therefore several thousand Orissa weavers are idle for want of custom. A similar cry came to me the other day from Ahmednagar, a strong weaving centre. My advice to them all was that, if these weaving families would but

introduce carding and spinning in their homes, they could be wholly independent of mill yarn and enlist the never-failing assistance of the A. I. S. A. It might be that the weavers might not earn as much as before because of part of their time being given to spinning. But now, under the revised policy of the A. I. S. A. which aims at giving one anna per hour to the spinner and is actually giving one and half pice per hour, the weaver would hardly feel the reduction in his income. And in any case a reduced wage is surely better than starvation.

Let it be borne in mind that the weaver, in introducing spinning and carding in his family, has to go in for very little outlay. The wheel he already has. It will no doubt require some improvement. He has to invest in a carding bow costing a few annas.

I understand that the Orissa Government are banishing mill yarn from their gaols and restricting their cloth purchases to khadi. They deserve congratulations for conforming to the constructive programme of the Congress. Let the workers in charge of the organization remember the prescription herein suggested, and they will find that production of the yarn required will be the easiest by educating the weavers to take up spinning. They will also by this method probably find that khadi can be, comparatively speaking, more cheaply produced than if they were to wait till they trained raw villagers to become efficient spinners. No doubt they will have to introduce spinning in all the villages. For that is the goal of the A. I. S. A. But they may not neglect the hand-loom weavers till the high purpose is accomplished.

Harijan, 20-8-1938

UNCERTIFIED KHADI

Reports have come to me showing that even responsible Congressmen use khadi that is sold in uncertified bhandars. No khadi is guaranteed pure that is sold in uncertified stores of which unfortunately there is quite a number which has increased since the phenomenal rise given by the A. I. S. A. in the wages of spinners.

It is not often that workers get better wages without asking. And when that happens unscrupulous persons enough will be found who will exploit the poverty or ignorance of the workers, pay them the old low wages, and sell their manufactures at prices lower than those charged under the raised rate of wages. Then again, cloth is sold under the name of khadi which has its warp made of mill-spun yarn. Pure khadi is that khadi which is hand-woven out of hand-spun yarn and for which wages have been paid according to the A. I. S. A. scale. Such khadi can be had only at certified stores.

Unfortunately Congressmen, out of ignorance or because they do not believe in khadi, buy cheap cloth for make-believe at the uncertified stores, and thus thwart the Congress policy about khadi and, to the extent of their purchase, defraud the spinners of the rise in the wages. Let the public realize that every rise in the price of khadi means at least that much more paid to the spinner. I use 'at least' advisedly. For the whole of the rise in wages is not charged to the buyers.

Those Congress leaders who open khadi stores without reference to the A. I. S. A. or without being asked by it, certainly harm their own institution, encourage fraud, and violate the Congress policy; whereas it should be the duty and pride of every Congressman to help in every way the effort of the A. I. S. A. to better the lot of the most helpless of humanity.

Harijan, 15-10-1938

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HOW TO POPULARIZE KHADI

A valued khadi worker writes a letter in Hindustani, which freely translated means:

> "Compared to mill cloth khadi is not an economic proposition in terms of prices. To compete with mill cloth you have to drop the cost of hand ginning, carding and spinning. Even for self-spinners, therefore, it is not a paying proposition. No doubt you have evolved new economics of khadi. But till the people at large appreciate them, khadi cannot be universal. Even the Congress ministers do not understand or appreciate your new economics. In the circumstances, will you not guide khadi workers and even the ministers and Congressmen in general? Your faith seems to be so strong that you would straightaway give eight annas per day to spinners for eight hours' honest and skilled work, if we, your co-workers, will let you. Frankly we do not possess your faith."

There is no doubt that khadi cannot compete with mill cloth; it was never meant to. If the people will not understand or appreciate the law governing khadi, it will never be universal. It must then remain the fad of monied people and cranks. And if it is to be merely that, the labours of a huge organization like the A. I. S. A. must mean a waste of effort, if not something much worse.

But khadi has a big mission. Khadi provides dignified labour to the millions who are otherwise idle for nearly four months in the year. Even apart from the remuneration the work brings, it is its own reward. For, if millions live in compulsory idleness, they must die spiritually, mentally and physically. The spinning

wheel automatically raises the status of millions of poor women. Even though, therefore, mill cloth were to be given gratis to the people, their true welfare demands that they should refuse to have it in preference to khadi, the product of their labours.

Life is more than money. It is cheaper to kill our aged parents who can do no work and who are a drag on our slender resources. It is also cheaper to kill our children whom we do not need for our material comfort and whom we have to maintain without getting anything in return. But we kill neither our parents nor our children, but consider it a privilege to maintain them no matter what their maintenance costs us. Even so must we maintain khadi to the exclusion of all other cloth. It is the force of habit which makes us think of khadi in terms of prices. We must revise our notion of khadi economics. And when we have studied them from the point of view of the national well-being, we shall find that khadi is never dear. We must suffer dislocation of domestic economy during the transition stage. At present we are labouring under a heavy handicap. Cotton production has been centralized for the sake of Lancashire and, if you will, for the sake of Indian mills. Prices of cotton are determined by the prices in foreign lands. When the production of cotton is distributed in accordance with the demands of khadi economics, cotton prices will not fluctuate and, in any case, will be, in effect, lower than today. When the people, either through State protection or through voluntary effort, have cultivated the habit of using only khadi, they will never think of it in terms of money, even as millions of vegetarians do not compare the prices of flesh foods with those of non-flesh foods. They will starve rather than take flesh foods even though they may be offered free.

But I recognize that very few Congressmen have this living faith in khadi. The ministers are Congressmen. They derive their inspiration from their

surroundings. If they had a living faith in khadi, they could do a great deal to popularize it.

Khadi was an integral part of the original Swaraj programme of 1920. In 1921-22 thousands of Congressmen repeated from hundreds of platforms that Swaraj for the millions depended upon the spinning wheel humming in every village. The late Ali Brothers used to say, at the numerous meetings they addressed, that without the charkha in every cottage and the loom in every village there was no freedom. Maulana Mahomed Ali used to say in his picturesque language that our charkhas were our instruments of war and the cones of yarn turned out by them were our ammuniton. He said this with a conviction that went home to his audiences. But the faith of those early days was not sustained. Congressmen in general have ceased to connect khadi with Swaraj. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru has called khadi the livery of our freedom. For how many does it bear that meaning? If Congressmen could have that belief, khadi itself would be current coin. Freedom is never dear at any price. It is the breath of life. What would a man not pay for living? The Congress flag was designed to represent not civil disobedience which is but a phase, but it was designed to represent the essentials of freedom. Its background is khadi. The spinning wheel covers and sustains it. Its colours show how necessary communal unity is for the attainment of freedom. Given the fulfilment of these conditions, civil disobedience and the suffering it implies may not be at all necessary. To wear khadi is for me to wear freedom.

Given a full-hearted acceptance of this meaning of khadi, I am able to say what the Congress ministers and, for that matter, all the ministers, khadi workers and Congressmen can and should do.

There may be a minister whose sole business would be to look after khadi and village industries. There should, therefore, be a department for this purpose.

The other departments will co-operate. Thus the Agricultural Department will frame a scheme of decentralization of cotton production, survey the land suitable for cotton production for village use, and find out how much cotton will be required for its province. It will even stock cotton at suitable centres for distribution. The Stores Department will make purchases of khadi available in the province and give orders for its cloth requirements. The Technical Departments will tax themselves to devise better wheels and other instruments of hand production. All these departments will keep in constant touch with the A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A., using them as their experts.

The Revenue Minister will devise means of protecting khadi against mill competition.

Khadi workers will with unremitting zeal investigate the laws governing the science of khadi and seek to make it more durable, more attractive, and believe themselves to be responsible for discovering means of making khadi universal. God helps only those who are ever watchful and who devote all their talents to their mission.

Congressmen in general will spread the gospel of khadi among their neighbours by themselves wearing it not ceremonially but habitually, by spinning themselves, and by helping khadi workers whenever they are called upon to do so.

Harijan, 10-12-1938

COMPLAINT AGAINST CONGRESSMEN

I have a letter from the Rangoon Khadi Bhandar and another from Karnatak complaining that Congress committees have certified khadi which was decertified by the A. I. S. A. There is no doubt whatsoever as to the truth of the complaint. I have copies of the certificates issued by two Congress bodies. Congress committees should know that these certificates are illegal. The only authority that can issue certificates about khadi is the A. I. S. A. No Congress committee has been or can be given the right unless the Congress resolution constituting the A. I. S. A. is changed.

There is no such thing as certified khadi. It is impossible to certify every piece and every article made of khadi; only shops and persons can be authorized to sell khadi approved by the A. I. S. A. The original definition of khadi has been broadened to ensure an adequate wage for the manufacturers of khadi. Those who sell any other khadi deprive khadi workers of the wage that the A. I. S. A. has of its own accord ensured for them. Let it not be said of any Congressman and Congress committee that they are interfering with the vast experiment in nation-building that the A. I. S. A. is conducting and which bids fair to put life and lustre in the dying bodies of millions of sisters whom no agency ensures even two pice per day. I hope, therefore, that the Congress committees and Congressmen will not only not interfere with the work of the A. I. S. A., but will give their full-hearted co-operation to numerous organizations of the A. I. S. A. especially in the sale of khadi. If there was a steadily increasing demand, it would be possible to provide remunerative work in every famine area.

Harijan, 24-12-1938

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TRUE SWADESHI

If I have to use the adjective 'true' before Swadeshi, a critic may ask, 'Is there also false Swadeshi?' Unfortunately I have to answer 'yes'. As, since the days of khadi, I am supposed to be an authority on Swadeshi, numerous conundrums are presented to me by correspondents. And I have been obliged to distinguish between the two kinds of Swadeshi. If foreign capital is mixed with indigenous, or if foreign talent is mixed with indigenous, is the enterprise Swadeshi? There are other questions too. But I had better reproduce the definition I gave to a minister the other day. "Any article is Swadeshi if it subserves the interest of the millions, even though the capital and talent are foreign but under effective Indian control." Thus khadi of the definition of the A. I. S. A. would be true Swadeshi even though the capital may be all foreign and there may be Western specialists employed by the Indian Board. Conversely, Bata's rubber or other shoes would be foreign though the labour employed may be all Indian and the capital also found by India. The manufactures will be doubly foreign because the control will be in foreign hands and the article, no matter how cheap it is, will oust the village tanner mostly and the village *mochi* always. Already the *mochis* of Bihar have begun to feel the unhealthy competition. The Bata shoe may be the saving of Europe; it will mean the death of our village shoemaker and tanner. I have given two telling illustrations, both partly imaginary. For in the A. I. S. A. the capital is all indigenous, and the whole of the talent also. But I would love to secure the engineering talent of the West to give me a village wheel which

will beat the existing wheels, though deep down in me I have the belief that the improvements that indigenous talent has made are by no means to be despised. But this is a digression. I do hope that those ministers and others who guide or serve the public will cultivate the habit of distinguishing between true and false Swadeshi.

Sevagram, 20-2-39
Harijan, 25-2-1939

WILL KHADI KILL KHADI?

When the increase in the spinners' wages was decided upon by the A. I. S. A. the Maharashtra Branch was the foremost in giving enthusiastic support to the proposal. It has the direct guidance of Shri Vinoba. It has worked out the increase programme with a precision not approached by the other provinces. The result is that the other provinces not having increased the wages to the same extent as the Maharashtra Branch are able to undersell the latter's khadi, and do not hesitate to send their stock to the areas covered by the Maharashtra Branch. Unscrupulous merchants are not slow to take advantage of the situation. Thus uncertified stores have sprung up in Nagpur, Wardha and elsewhere. The unwary public, not knowing the new arrangements and eager to buy cheap khadi, prefer to patronize the uncertified stores, thus doing great damage to the Maharashtra Branch stores. The result is that the Maharashtra Branch has either to reduce wages or to close down its business. This would amount to khadi killing khadi. Khadi-lovers should know that the economics of khadi are different from and often contrary to the ordinary economics of the competitive system which is not governed by the principle of the greatest good of all, i. e. of the least among the downtrodden. Thus I have endeavoured to show in these columns that, if khadi is to fulfil its mission —

1. There must be progressive increase in the rise of the wages of the spinners till the minimum of one anna per hour is reached.

2. The ideal is that each village should produce and use its own khadi. From this it is clear that the least that should be done at present is that each province should produce enough and no more for its

own requirements, permission being given for the sale outside its limits of such khadi as can only be produced by that province. For instance, Andhra can export, say, 80 counts khadi outside its limits, but not coarse khadi no matter how cheap it is.

3. No profits can be made for the sake of profits. The wage-earners are the shareholders and the proprietors in this the greatest co-operative organization in the world. If, therefore, there happen to be profits made in any single year, the proper use to make of them is to devote them to increase the number of spinners so long as there are any to be provided for, otherwise to increase the wages of the existing spinners.

4. Any province that makes an attempt to increase the wages of spinners to the desired level should be encouraged by the other branches and khadi-lovers.

5. The general public should restrict their use of khadi to the khadi produced in their own provinces although it is dearer than in the other provinces. They must trust the A. I. S. A. to do its best for every province.

6. The policy of the A. I. S. A. no doubt should be to reach uniformity of wages and prices throughout India. But till that ideal condition is reached the public should have humanitarianism enough to know that they have a duty by the wage-earners of their own province. It is almost as bad to have interprovincial competition as it is to have competition with the outside world.

The immediate thing to be wished for is that all uncertified stores should be closed. Congressmen and others should warn the public against buying from such stores, and provincial branches should resolutely refuse to sell their stock outside except at the instance of the provincial agencies concerned of the A. I. S. A.

Sevagram, 19-6-39

Harijan, 24-6-1939

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KHADI AS FAMINE INSURANCE AND MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

There has been a full discussion among the khadi workers at the meeting of the A. I. S. A. held at Wardha on the 12th inst. and thereafter. It has been claimed for khadi that it has at least three definite functions. It provides a supplementary occupation to the semi-starved and semi-employed millions of India on a scale unequalled by any other occupation. It provides, with the least possible loss, work in famine areas; and it is the best medium of instruction for the boys and girls of India in the primary stage.

But there is one definite condition for the success of khadi as famine insurance or medium of instruction in the primary stage. What is to be done with the khadi produced in famine areas and in the schools? If khadi cannot be sold, it is as useless as the stones broken in many parts of India during famine time. I have suggested often enough in these columns that all the khadi produced under the last two heads must be taken up by the State. This can be most easily done through the A. I. S. A., if the State guarantees the losses as it guarantees today railway dividends and many other things. Considering price, khadi is undoubtedly dearer than mill cloth. Therefore it commands a market only among patriots and philanthropists. But those who have no spare cash will not be easily actuated by philanthropy or patriotism. They will go to the cheapest market. It is therefore the business of the State to shut out or tax heavily enough such goods as compete with those which, for the general good, should command a market. I think it can be taken as proved that khadi comes under

such goods. The administration of eight provinces is virtually in Congress hands to an extent enough to protect khadi and the like. There is no reason why the other provinces should not follow the Congress provinces in matters like protection of khadi on which there is no difference of opinion. Hindu Muslim unity may not come as early as many of us wish. But even as we breathe common air and drink the common water supplied by the rivers, wells or waterworks, surely we might agree on a common policy regarding other necessaries of life, without in any way interfering with our differences, if we must unfortunately hug these and use them for warring against one another. But whether the other provinces fall in line or not, it is necessary for the Congress provinces to confer with the A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A. and evolve a line of action whereby the difficulty I have pointed out can be solved without delay.

Sevagram, 14-8-39
Harijan, 19-8-1939

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SPINNERS' WAGES

The following is the translation of the resolution adopted by the A. I. S. A. at its meeting on the 15th inst. at Wardha:

"The A. I. S. A. has for the past four years recognized the duty of making a progressive rise in the wages payable to the spinners. In the performance of this duty the Maharashtra Branch of the Sangh has paid the highest rate of all the branches. But the result of this experiment of the Branch has been that khadi has proved unable to bear the burden and the sales have considerably gone down. The rise in wages should not result in a diminution in the capacity of khadi to provide work for the unemployed. It seems that in view of the existing circumstances it is necessary to postpone the insistence on giving the spinners more than three annas for eight hours' spinning. There is much unemployment. There is a sufficient number of spinners eager to work for less than one anna for eight hours' spinning. Other people are ready to give them work at such low wages to the detriment of the principle laid down by the Sangh. Apart from the Sangh providing them also with work there seems to be no other way of combating the evil. Thus there are two duties before the Sangh: one that of raising the spinners' wages to eight annas for an eight hour day, and the other of finding work for the unemployed sisters. There comes an interim period before reaching the simultaneous performance of the two duties.

Moreover there is a danger of famine overtaking some parts of the country. The spinning wheel is being proved to be of the greatest help at such

times. But the question arises whether it is necessary to make the scale of wages lower than even three annas. A third problem arises from the fact of the production of yarn in the schools conducted according to the Wardha scheme of education.

Taking all these things into consideration the Sangh has come to the following conclusion :

Generally, the scale of three annas for eight hours' work of the fixed standard be not touched for the time being. But it should be open to any branch to rise higher than the scale, provided that it takes over the responsibility of sustaining its sales under the higher scale. In the event of the necessity being felt of lowering the wages of artisans in the famine areas, the decrease may be made with the previous permission of the Secretary. The Sangh should take over from the respective Governments the sales of khadi prepared in famine areas and in schools conducted under the Wardha scheme of education, provided that these Governments bear the losses sustained in the disposal of such khadi."

This is an important resolution. It marks a slowing down of the speed with which I was goading the Sangh to rise to eight annas wages for an eight hour day for the spinner. I knew that the goal was not to be reached in one jump. I had, however, nursed the hope that every few months would show a progressive increase in the wages. But reports from the different branches and the partial failure of the experiment carried on under my nose by Shri Jajuji under the guidance of Shri Vinoba with high hopes of going forward with the rise, have opened my eyes to the stern and grim reality that this country is so terribly poor that it cannot afford to pay a wage of eight annas per day of eight hours to millions of women. Generally nowhere in rural areas do village labourers or artisans earn eight annas for eight hours' work. Spinners could not earn eight annas without all the

other classes doing likewise. And the purchasing classes simply have not the money to pay an all-round wage of eight annas per day unless conditions are radically altered. The crushing and unproductive military burden drains the country dry. Add to this the inordinately high salaries and correspondingly high pensions paid, and spent abroad. There are other internal causes also for this gnawing poverty. But I must not stray from the purpose of this article.

Be the cause or causes what they may, the painful fact has been brought home by khadi workers that in spite of all the will in the world the middle class khadi buyer simply has not the money to buy khadi at the increased price necessitated by the rise in wages beyond the point of three annas. They report that for the time being at any rate that is the saturation point. The resolution is a recognition of this painful fact.

But even the scale of three annas cannot be sustained if the Provincial Governments do not come to the rescue. They can do so both through legislative and administrative effort. This they will only do if they will use the A. I. S. A., the A. I. V. I. A. and the Hindustani Talimi Sangh as their own expert, voluntary and honorary agencies. I present them with the prospect of putting several lakhs of rupees into the pockets of the famishing villagers by providing them with employment during leisure hours. But no progress can be made if the manufactures of the villagers do not become current coin.

Sevagram, 20-8-39
Harijan, 26-8-1939

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WANTED PURCHASERS

The following is taken from a letter from the Gandhi Ashram, Meerut:

> "The A. I. S. A. is giving work today to more than three lakhs of people. Its operations extend to 13,000 villages. 2,571 workers are engaged in this great nation-building activity. The quota of the U. P. is no mean one. We have more than 40,000 spinners on our registers. The number of other artisans, weavers, washermen, carders, etc. is 4,780. Nearly 3,043 villages are covered by our activities, and 600 workers carry the message of khadi to different parts of the province. It brings all the creative forces of the nation into play. We learn to combine, plan, co-ordinate and build. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has been reported to have said in the Working Committee that the spinning wheel cannot fulfil all our needs of cloth today. I feel this statement underrates the possibility of the spinning wheel. I can say from our experience that we have not been able to touch even the fringe of the problem. Production can be multiplied a thousand times within a very short period provided, we have a ready market for the khadi we manufacture."

I have omitted the portion containing an appeal for sales. I hope that their effort will meet with the success it deserves. But what I wish to consider here is the reason for the sales not keeping pace with the production. Propaganda undoubtedly has its place. But more than propaganda is wanted scientific research. There is no doubt that our people use on an average 15 yards of cloth per head per year. There is no doubt that this cloth costs the country a figure

approaching 100 crores of rupees, meaning less than three rupees per head, counting India's population at 35 crores. It is easy enough to say that the sales can be effected if the State protects khadi. That khadi deserves protection is, in my opinion, a self-proved proposition. But have the khadi workers who have the qualifications found out whether we have done all we could to command sales even without protection? There are two obstacles. Mill-made cloth is said to be much cheaper than khadi, and has a variety of colour, design and finish which khadi does not possess. The second has been largely overcome, but more is perhaps required to be done. There must be a limit beyond which probably khadi cannot go. If there is, we must frankly confess it. But my fear is that sufficient research has not been made as to the prices. Professor Kumarappa has put forth a startling claim for the spinning wheel. He has produced figures in support of it.* But the man in the street asks the question:

*" Taking an industry like the textile that is open to both the methods we shall be able to compare the figures satisfactorily. An average cotton spinning and weaving mill uses about Rs. 13 lakhs of capital and employs about 1,400 men. This works out to about Rs. 900 per person employed. The production per rupee invested works out to 2.5 lbs. of yarn and 1.5 lbs. of cloth. (The figures are for the year 1932-33.) A cottage unit of one loom, ten charkhas, and with Rs. 60 as working capital works out to an investment of about Rs. 9 per person employed, and the production per rupee invested is about ten times as much as in a mill. Computed from this we would need Rs. 300 crores of capital employing 33 lakhs of people if we supplied all our requirements by mill production, while we would require about Rs. 72 crores of investment employing 800 lakhs of people if our supply were to come from cottage units. The two methods have their undoubted advantages

Then why is khadi dearer than mill cloth? This question has to be satisfactorily answered: The obvious answers I would not consider to be satisfactory. The answers themselves have to be thoroughly examined and the way to overcome the difficulties discovered and pursued till khadi comes to occupy its natural supremacy.

It is a shame that we who grow more cotton than we need should have to send it abroad for being turned into cloth for us. It is equally a shame for us that we who have in our villages unlimited unused labour, and can easily supply ourselves with village instruments of manufacture, should send our cotton to the mills of our cities for it to be manufactured into cloth for our use. We know the history of the shame. But we have not yet discovered the sure way to deal

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which no one will deny. The question before us is to choose that method which will fit into the conditions that prevail in our country. We are poor but we have an ocean of labour wealth. Therefore an intelligent plan will find the cottage method fit into the scheme for our country. An engineer who is planning the buildings in a country abounding in good clay and wood will plan on building with bricks and timber, but one who is planning for a country abounding in cement and iron will recommend reinforced concrete. It will be foolish if the recommendations were the other way round. There is no single patented road to progress. Planning has to co-ordinate the available factors of production to produce the best possible results, not only material, but social and cultural. Any planning in our country that ignores the absorption of labour wealth will be misplaced. Our analysis has shown that the centralized method of production, whatever may be its capacity to produce, is incapable of finding employment for as large a number of persons as we have to provide for. Therefore it stands condemned in this country."

with the double shame beyond a patriotic appeal to the public. The latter have returned an encouraging response. But the recent resolution seems to show that we have reached the limit of the patronage. We may not be satisfied until khadi becomes an article of universal wear. It may be that in the prosecution of our search we may find, as some suggest we shall, that khadi can never become an economic proposition. We should then have no hesitation in making the admission however it may hurt our pride and demolish the propositions we have hitherto advanced with so much confidence. But the admission cannot be made till we have made every search that is possible for a human being to make so as to yield an unequivocal answer to the questions propounded by me.

Sevagram, 21-8-39
Harijan, 26-8-1939

DIVIDED LOYALTY ?

Shri Appa Patwardhan writes:

> "The Bombay Government spend a large sum in helping weavers. They have appointed a marketing officer and salesmen. They give loans. Yet the weavers cannot compete with mills, and in my opinion the expenses incurred do not bear fruit. Moreover the weavers use foreign yarn as well. Side by side with this fruitless help the Government tender some help to khadi also. I do not know how far this divided loyalty is justified."

I have always held the opinion that help to the weavers who use foreign or Indian mill yarn is a waste of money and effort. Experience has not changed the view. Nor does it change because in certain provinces the Congress rules. I hold this view because the disappearance of the weaver of mill yarn is a question of time only. In the nature of things it cannot be otherwise. The weavers' only hope lies in a universal revival of hand-spinning. Hand-spinning and hand-weaving are interdependent, never hand-weaving and mill-spinning. I have therefore suggested that, if hand-spinning cannot immediately supply the weavers' requirements, they should be induced to introduce hand-spinning, carding, etc., in their own families, if they will not become spinners themselves. Now that in several provinces the Congress rules, the saving of the weaver becomes easier. Thus the Government can encourage spinning on a wide scale, guarantee the loss in khadi sales as the State guarantees the foreign railway companies. It is the primary duty of the State to guarantee employment of its choice to everyone in need of it. This includes the weavers also. If during

the transition stage it is found impossible to guarantee weaving for every weaver, the State has to find him some other employment, profitable alike to the State and the individual. It should be borne in mind that the possibilities of hand-spinning have not yet been explored by any Government. I am of opinion that such investigation will yield startlingly encouraging results. My argument undoubtedly assumes the elimination of all mills from consideration. No industry, indigenous or foreign, can be allowed to increase unemployment and thus harm the true interest of the community as a whole.

On the train to Simla, 3-9-39

Harijan, 9-9-1939

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SWARAJ THROUGH WOMEN

Now that the Working Committee has accepted spinning as an indispensable condition of civil disobedience, the women of India have a rare opportunity of serving the country. The salt campaign brought out tens of thousands from their seclusion and showed that they could serve the country on equal terms with men. It gave the village woman a dignity which she had never enjoyed before. The restoration of spinning to its central place in India's peaceful campaign for deliverance from the Imperial yoke gives her women a special status. In spinning they have a natural advantage over men.

Since the beginning of time there has been a division of labour between men and women. Adam wove and Eve span. The distinction persists to the present day. Men spinners are an exception. In the Punjab when during 1920-21 I asked men to spin, they used to tell me that men considered spinning to be beneath their dignity and that it was solely women's occupation. Men nowadays do not object on the ground of dignity. There are thousands who spin for sacrifice. It was when men took up spinning from a patriotic motive that spinning was reduced to a science and inventions as great as in any other field were made. Nevertheless experience shows that spinning will remain woman's speciality. I believe there is a good reason behind the experience. Spinning is essentially a slow and comparatively silent process. Woman is the embodiment of sacrifice and therefore non-violence. Her occupations must therefore be, as they are, more conducive to peace than war. That she is now being dragged down for purposes of violent

war is no credit to modern civilization. I have no doubt that violence so ill becomes woman that presently she will rebel against the violation of her fundamental nature. I feel that man too will repent of his folly. Equality of the sexes does not mean equality of occupations. There may be no legal bar against a woman hunting or wielding a lance. But she instinctively recoils from a function that belongs to man. Nature has created sexes as complements of each other. Their functions are defined as are their forms.

But a proof of the different functions of the sexes is unnecessary for my purpose. The fact stands, at any rate in India, that millions of women regard spinning as their natural occupation. The Working Committee's resolution automatically shifts the burden from men to women and gives to them an opportunity of showing their mettle. I would love to find that my future army contained a vast preponderance of women over men. If the fight came, I should then approach it with much greater confidence than if men predominated. I would dread the latter's violence. Women would be my guarantee against such an outbreak.

Sevagram, 27-11-'39
Harijan, 2-12-1939

WHAT IT MEANS

Those who believe that India can be freed and her freedom retained only through non-violence, will surely believe that non-violence on a mass scale can only be observed by the masses being usefully and knowingly occupied for the sake of the country. What is that one thing which all can do easily without any capital worth the name and which in itself is calculated to soothe the nervous system? The answer will unequivocally be hand-spinning and its anterior processes. And it is indigenous to the soil. Millions can easily learn it, and its output is always current coin. If there were no mills, yarn would be as much valued as, say, ghee. Famine of yarn would be as much felt as that of staples. If the people have the will, they can produce their cloth without much labour.

In the States of Europe where war is a recognized institution, adult males are conscripted for military service for a given number of years. In a country that wants to defend itself and regulate its life without war preparation, people have to be conscripted for productive national service. If a country's vital requirements are produced through a centralized industry, it will find it necessary to guard them even as a capitalist guards his treasures. A country whose culture is based on non-violence will find it necessary to have every home as much self-contained as possible. Indian society was at one time unknowingly constituted on a non-violent basis. The home life, i. e. the village, was undisturbed by the periodical visitations from barbarous hordes. Mayne has shown that India's villages were a congeries of republics. In them there were no ladies and gentlemen, or all were.

Unless this argument is accepted by the Congressmen, I hold it to be impossible to establish non-violence that will be proof against temptation, and that will stand true no matter how heavy the odds may be against it. Without such non-violence the country cannot put up a fight in which there is no going back and there is no defeat. The Congress will never prove its non-violent intention before Britishers and the world.

The Congress non-violence is intended as well in respect of the rulers, as of all those who fear, distrust or despise the great institution. I have no doubt that want of this broad non-violence is responsible for our failure to reach communal unity. The fact is that Congressmen have not demonstrated that living non-violence in their dealings even among themselves. And I cannot resist the conviction that the deficiency of our non-violence can be measured by the deficiency in our khadi programme. Our belief in either has been half-hearted. I plead for full-hearted belief in both. And the Congress will be so invulnerable that it is highly likely that it will not have to go through the fire of civil resistance in order to win India's freedom.

With this background, let Congressmen carefully study the table (printed on page 575) prepared for me by Shri Krishnadas Gandhi who is among the few khadi experts who have made a careful study of khadi in all its aspects. The figures are an interesting study for khadi-lovers. They are tentative and based on Krishnadas's experience. They will vary for inferior grades of cotton. But they are good enough as a workable index. Those who do not wish to take the trouble of studying the whole table should look at count 14 only. They will see that a self-spinner's khadi will cost him a little less than 3 as. per sq. yard. I have contemplated at least half an hour's spinning per day by every Congressman. Even

a novice should easily spin 100 yards in 30 minutes. Many spin 200 yards with ease during that time. Supposing the self-spinner needs 20 yards per year, he will need to spin at the most for one hour per day. Thus one-fifth of the whole population would need to spin at the most for five hours per day for yarn enough to clothe the whole of India at the rate of 20 yards per head. The present average is said to be 15 yards per head. With greater efficiency the working hours can be considerably reduced. I hold that such distributed production of khadi requires minimum of effort and expenditure. It means voluntary co-operation on a scale never witnessed anywhere in modern times. Given the required will, the proposition is perfectly feasible. Anyway I expect every Congressman to put up his best effort to spin intelligently as much as he can and organize khadi sales among his neighbours; and this he should do in the belief that he is taking his due share in the preparation of the country for Independence.

Sevagram, 4-12-39
Harijan, 9-12-1939

KHADI FIGURES

AS PER SQUARE YARD

Count	Threads per inch	Square yds. of cloth per 100 yds. of yarn	Square yds. of cloth for 360 days at 100yds. of yarn per day	YARN: Yards	YARN: Hanks	YARN: Weight in Tolas	COST: Cotton	COST: Carding	COST: Spinning	COST: Weaving	COST: Unbleached cloth	COST: Self-spun cloth	COST: Self-spun and self-carded cloth
							as. p.	as. p.	as. p.	as. p.	as. p.	as. p.	as. p.
10	38	$\frac{1}{30}$	12	3,040	$3\frac{9}{16}$	$14\frac{1}{4}$	$1-10\frac{1}{2}$	$0-8\frac{1}{2}$	2—6	1-5	6—6	4—0	$3—3\frac{1}{2}$
12	40	$\frac{1}{32}$	$11\frac{1}{4}$	3,200	$3\frac{3}{4}$	$12\frac{1}{2}$	$1—6\frac{3}{4}$	$0-7\frac{1}{2}$	2-10	1-6	$6—6\frac{1}{4}$	$3—8\frac{1}{4}$	$3—0\frac{3}{4}$
14	42	$\frac{1}{34}$	$10\frac{1}{2}$	3,360	$3\frac{15}{16}$	$11\frac{1}{4}$	1—5	$0-6\frac{3}{4}$	3—1	$1-6\frac{1}{2}$	$6—7\frac{1}{4}$	$3—6\frac{1}{4}$	$2-11\frac{1}{2}$
16	45	1	10	3,600	$4\frac{1}{4}$	$10\frac{5}{8}$	1—4	0-6	$3—5\frac{1}{2}$	1-8	$6-11\frac{1}{2}$	3 - 6	3—0
20	50	$\frac{1}{40}$	9	4,000	$4\frac{11}{16}$	$9\frac{3}{8}$	*1—5	$0-8\frac{1}{2}$	$3—9\frac{1}{2}$	1-10	7—9	$3-11\frac{1}{2}$	3—3

* Calculated on a higher qualily of cotton.

N. B. 1. General requirements being fulfilled by cloth of 8 to 20 counts, their mean, i. e. 12 counts, has been taken as the basis of our calculations below.

2. Each square yard of cloth made out of sacrificial yarn will cost as. 3—8¼ p.

3. This yarn at the rate of 100 yards per day will produce 11¼ square yards of cloth a year, i. e. ¾ of his requirements calculated at 15 square yards.

4. Making allowance for children, invalids and otherwise disabled persons, the number of able-bodied spinners may safely be taken as 40 per cent of the total population. (This of course is a conservative estimate. The correct figure would be nearer 60 per cent than 40 per cent.) Hence $\frac{2}{5}\times\frac{3}{4}=\frac{3}{10}$ or near one-third of the total requirement of cloth will be produced by self-spinning and the remaining two-thirds will have to be made up by spinning on wages. The cost of a square yard of khadi will thus amount to approximately 5 as. 8 p.

KRISHNADAS GANDHI

193

'SPIN FOR SWARAJ'

Some boys and girls came to me the other day and asked for my autograph. They wanted some message in addition. To all of them I gave the message: 'Spin for Swaraj.' For, just now I have nothing but spinning and Swaraj on the brain. I had expected my young visitors to be distressed to find, instead of a copy book maxim, a message that asked them to create something and that too so insipid as spinning. But on my inquiring, they told me they would spin. Shri Sitaram Sastri tells me people are asking for charkhas, etc. Another friend, an old jail bird, tells me I should definitely set apart one year for spinning work and universalization of khadi. But the following letter comes from a Bombay advocate as a counterblast:

> "'If you will not laugh at me, I will unhesitatingly say, it is the programme of universal spinning.' In these words you addressed the U. P. Congressmen among whom, according to you, were some 'who had laughed at the charkha and non-violence.' But to your 'utter astonishment you found them reconciled to both.' This is what baffles you.
>
> Without claiming to speak for the U. P. Congressmen referred to, let me tell you why most Congressmen do not actively oppose such statements of yours as, 'If millions spin for Swaraj and in the spirit of non-violence, there will probably be no necessity for civil disobedience,' and your insistence on non-violence in word, deed and thought which they know is impossible and which you, the author of it, have not been able to attain, according to your own admission. The reason for this attitude is simply this that you have become a symbol of the might of

the Congress and, to the general masses, the words 'Gandhi' and 'Congress' have become synonymous: and hence Congressmen are not ready to lose such a powerful weapon at this stage of the War of Independence. The Congress minus Gandhi will not be half as powerful as its former self. This fact is realized by all and sundry, and that is why they would not willingly allow you to depart from the Congress even at the cost of rendering 'obedience without faith', as you term it. This is, of course, the primary reason, but there are again wheels within the wheels of the Congress machinery. There are the 'rightists' and the 'leftists', apart from various other shades of opinion. The 'rightists' are terribly afraid of the 'leftists' and their socialistic doctrines. They know the power of your name and fully utilize it as a counterpoise to the leftists' economic approach to the masses. We witness the curious sight of absolutely ordinary human beings apparently acting against their own personal interests, when we see mill-owners support khadi. Why is it so? An eminent economist, who is in your good books, once told me that you are the last hope of the capitalists. They know fully well that khadi will never be cheap enough for the masses and hence no danger to their interests will accrue. On the contrary, by paying lip-service to your khadi and 'non-violence' doctrines, they can take advantage of your 'trusteeship' doctrine in their dealings with their workmen and make the ordinary working of trade unions impossible except those run on Ahmedabad lines. Capitalists, landlords and even the Princes (not all) freely fling about the words 'non-violence', 'truth', etc., so far as these suit their convenience. As for the 'leftists', they are in no way behind the 'rightists'. They too want your name as a means to approach the masses. That is why they are flocking to the Congress. They don't mind non-violence as a policy and, just to keep you in humour,

they might as well say they are reconciled to it. I don't deny that there may be many Congressmen who are genuine adherents of your creed, but the vast majority have their own axes to grind.

I dare not say I know the Congressmen better than you do, but I am baffled no less, on my part, by your 'utter astonishment' and ' 'baffling', unless it is, as you say, that 'being boxed up in Sevagram', you have 'no direct touch with the people'. Let me assure you, dear Gandhiji, that, if only you will take cognisance of the elementary motives which move ordinary and even more than ordinary human beings (and Congressmen too are human beings), your 'astonishment' and 'baffling' will disappear as the morning mist does before the scorching rays of the sun."

I cannot deny the force of the writer's argument. But all my life I have taken co-workers' words at their face value, unless dishonesty has been patent. I have never lost by my trustfulness. On the contrary, I can recall instances of men who were lukewarm in the beginning but became enthusiastic in the end. When you have to deal with large numbers of men and women, it is bad policy to start with distrust.

The mill-owners who give me money even for the charkha tell me frankly that they do not fear its competition. Whatever motive they have is on the surface. Nothing is hidden. If the charkha economics are bad, it will die a natural death. But given the will of the nation, the charkha will live when the last mill has closed down. Khadi is dear in competition with the mills. It is cheaper than mill cloth, if it gives partial and profitable employment, as it does, to millions of the unemployed in India.

If what the Bombay advocate says is true, why is it that the masses cling to me and that I represent the power of the Congress? Is not the question clearly answered by the blazing fact that I represent

undiluted non-violence? The unsophisticated masses have unconsciously and instinctively accepted me as their friend, guide and servant. There never was the slightest difficulty in my feeling one with them or their feeling one with me. I never had to make any effort to draw them towards me, whether here or in South Africa. I cannot account for the bond except by attributing the phenomenon to the power of love.

I am not ashamed to own that many capitalists are friendly towards me and do not fear me. They know that I desire to end capitalism almost, if not quite, as much as the most advanced socialist or even communist. But our methods differ, our languages differ. My theory of 'trusteeship' is no make-shift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. That possessors of wealth have not acted up to the theory does not prove its falsity; it proves the weakness of the wealthy. No other theory is compatible with non-violence. In the non-violent method the wrong-doer compasses his own end, if he does not undo the wrong. For, either through non-violent non-cooperation he is made to see his error, or he finds himself completely isolated. And so the wise socialists and leftists, when the time for action arrives, are not likely to stand in my way. They know that the poor and the downtrodden will be happy if my method succeeds. They are not ready for action with their method; and they are too patriotic to interfere with me, so long as they believe in my honesty and love of the country.

Nevertheless I have to guard against hypocrisy. The charkha is my test. There is no simple test whereby I can find out how much a Congressman has done in the way of communal unity or removal of untouchability. But I can easily find out how much he has spun and to what extent, in a particular area, khadi has become current coin. I have, there-

fore, not quite accepted the advice of the friend who wants me to set apart a period for exclusive khadi work. I propose to judge the total effort by the result. I have shown conclusively, by producing arithmetical calculations, that by self-spinning khadi can be worn by the poorest of villagers. No other village craft has the capacity that spinning and its ancillary processes have for putting so much money into the pockets of the largest number of villagers with the minimum of capital outlay and organizational effort.

Let Congressmen know that I should have no confidence in myself or them to embark on direct action, even when other difficulties were overcome, unless I had proof positive of successful khadi work all over India. This is not possible without serious, sustained and intelligent effort on the part of the vast mass of Congressmen. Therefore I say: "Spin for Swaraj."

Sevagram, 11-12-39
Harijan, 16-12-1939

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SPINNING WHEELS v. MILLS

Congressmen should not weary of my filling these columns with everything about the charkha and khadi. Heart peace among communities and reinstatement of the wheel in every home are my politics, for I expect to gain the freedom of the country from political and economic bondage through these means in the place of red rebellion.

The problem before every Congressman is how to displace mill cloth, whether foreign or indigenous. It is often believed in Congress circles that indigenous mill cloth is as good as khadi and superior because of its cheapness. The cheapness theory in terms of the crores of artisans has been exploded. Mill-spun for these millions is dearer than hand-spun. The former means deprivation of their wages. Imagine what would happen if, on the score of foreign wheat being cheaper, the wheat-grower was displaced!

If the village spinners and weavers are to come into their own, and that quickly, every Congressman has to become a master spinner and master weaver. He should be able to teach and guide the poor villagers. He has to be a khadi technician. He has to spin for the sake of the country. I have shown that khadi cannot be made cheap enough for the middle class unless there is enough sacrificial yarn or unless the spinner is put upon the old *begar* wage of one pice to one anna for eight hours' strenuous spinning.

No Congressman would put in the required labour and skill unless he believed that the indigenous factory mills had to be and could be replaced by the charkha and the hand-loom.

If Congressmen have this faith, all Congress organizations will become efficient spinning and weaving schools. I remember how in 1921 Congress offices used to collect indifferently spun yarn and expect it to be woven somehow. It was all a huge waste. Nobody knew how to deal with it nor what to do to ensure good spinning. Things are different now. Much knowledge and experience have been gained by the A. I. S. A. Some literature has also been published. Every Congress office should become a model laboratory and spinning and weaving institute for the organization of villages. And, as I have suggested, khadi is the centre round which other village industries should revolve and be organized. Congressmen will discover the tremendous possibilities of this kind of service. It is chiefly mental lethargy that is in the way of quick and successful organization of villages. I suggest that, if India is to evolve along non-violent lines, it will have to decentralize many things. Centralization cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force. Simple homes from which there is nothing to take away require no policing; the palaces of the rich must have strong guards to protect them against dacoity. So must huge factories. Rurally organized India will run less risk of foreign invasion than urbanized India, well equipped with military, naval and air forces.

Assuming then that Congressmen have understood the meaning and implications of the charkha, they would, without a moment's delay, set about qualifying themselves for the service. Assume further that they are novices. Then they will procure some cotton, preferably grown in their villages, taluks or districts. They should gin it with the hand or at the most on a board with the help of a rod. They will keep the seed and, when they have enough, either sell it or use it for their cattle, if they have any. They will card the cotton with a hand bow, costing next to nothing. They can improvise one themselves. This carded

cotton should be turned into slivers. These will be spun on the takli. When they have fairly mastered these processes, they can proceed to speedier ones. They will also put themselves and the members of their families right regarding the use of khadi. They will keep an accurate record of their daily progress and will learn the arithmetic of yarn.

Congress committees will rearrange their offices with the help of the local A. I. S. A. branch and convert them into spinning and weaving depots. I must warn Congressmen against the fatal error of sending to distant depots their yarn for weaving. The economics of khadi require that from cultivation of cotton to the manufacture of khadi and its disposal all the processes should, as far as possible, be gone through in the same village or centre. Thus it is wrong to spin yarn in the Punjab, weave it in Bombay, and sell in Malabar the khadi thus manufactured. If Congressmen and committees attend to this simple rule when beginning khadi work, they will not find themselves appalled by the difficulty of the task. If they succeed in their own district, there is no reason why the other 249 districts should not be successfully organized. The reasoning is valid even if villages were treated as units. It must be confessed that we have not as yet one single village organized in that fashion. Certainly Sevagram is not, even though I am supposed to be living in it. My failure, however, need not dismay a worker who will make the organization of his own village his sole occupation.

Sevagram, 25-12-39
Harijan, 30-12-1939

THE WHEEL ABIDES

A collegiate from Baroda tells me that the high school and college students in Baroda rarely use khadi. Hardly anyone spins. An earnest worker of Berar argues: "Do you not think that Swaraj is an impossibility if your condition about khadi is seriously meant? Your second condition about fellowship too seems to be equally incapable of fulfilment." This friend is himself a lover of khadi, spins regularly, and cultivates fellowship with everybody. But he has the honest doubt expressed above. The friend could have said with equal force the same thing about non-violence apart from the charkha. Perhaps he had no doubt about the charkha and goodwill being external and internal signs of non-violence. My answer to the collegiate and the Berar friend is the same. I am not blind to what they say. I know the difficulty of fulfilling the conditions within the implied time limit. I am helpless. I am not obstinate. For my own reputation, if for nothing else, I should prescribe other and more feasible conditions, if it were at all possible. But even as the condition of producing water is the presence of H_2O, so are the charkha and goodwill conditions and signs of non-violence. Such being my fixed view, I have to insist upon the fulfilment of the two conditions before I can declare mass civil disobedience with any confidence.

My faith is in God and therefore in the people. If He wants me to put up another fight, He will change people's hearts. The conditions prescribed by me are not physically impossible. If the people will it, they can take to spinning and khadi today. If they will it, they can be good to the whole of mankind. The age of

miracles is not past. But supposing that the conditions are not fulfilled, I shall cheerfully become the laughing-stock of India and the world and descend from the pedestal of generalship. I shall have the supreme satisfaction of being true to myself. I shall read in the apparent failure a sign from God that the conditions were a hallucination produced by Him to save the nation from a disastrous career.

Sevagram, 1-1-40
Harijan, 6-1-1940

" The East bowed low before the blast
In patient deep disdain,
She let the thundering legions past
And plunged in thought again."

I congratulate the Socialists, the Royists and others who have spoken out their minds on spinning. The situation that faces the country is most serious. If civil resistance is declared in right earnest, there should be no suspension unless there is a proper settlement. It therefore follows that, if the fight is to be non-violent, the non-violence must be unadulterated. I must not be weak in my statement of the requirements. If I hesitate, I would betray the national cause. I dare not lead an army that does not answer the qualifications which I regard as essential for success.

No half-hearted allegiance will do. Divided allegiance will lead to disaster. The critics should realize that I have not imposed myself on the Congress. I am no dictator though I have been given that nickname by unkind friends. I have no sanction for imposing my will on any person. Therefore I call myself truly a servant of the people. The public should know that I have not even been formally appointed 'Generalissimo'. Not that the Working Committee would not give me the formal appointment. But I suggested, and the members agreed, that there was no necessity for it. Thus if ever there can be a bond of unmixed love and confidence between a general and his men, this is such a one. There is nothing to prevent the Congress from ignoring me and passing any resolution it likes. There is nothing, so far as I am concerned, to prevent any person or any province or district from declaring

civil disobedience at his or its own risk. They will be guilty of indiscipline towards the Congress. But I can do nothing in regard to such insubordination.

Hence it should be unnecessary for me to argue out the case for spinning. It should be enough that it is the requirement that every satyagrahi has to fulfil.

But I must continue to argue till I convert opponents or I own defeat. For my mission is to convert every Indian whether he is a Hindu, Muslim or any other, even Englishmen and finally the world, to non-violence for regulating mutual relations whether political, economic, social or religious. If I am accused of being too ambitious, I should plead guilty. If I am told that my dream can never materialize, I would answer 'that is possible,' and go my way. I am a seasoned soldier of non-violence, and I have evidence enough to sustain my faith. Whether, therefore, I have one comrade or more or none, I must continue my experiment.

The first thing I would like co-workers to realize is that I have no hate in me for a single Englishman. I am not interested in driving him out of India. I am interested in converting him into a servant of India instead of his being and believing himself to be a ruler or a member of the ruling race. I feel towards him precisely as I feel towards an Indian, no matter what his faith may be. Therefore those who do not share this elementary quality with me, cannot become co-satyagrahis.

My love of Englishmen is not of the drawing room type. No one has painted their imperialism in more lurid colours than perhaps I have. But then I have done likewise in my domestic as also political circle. The love of my conception, if it is as soft as a rose petal, can also be harder than flint. My wife has had to experience the hard variety. My eldest son is experiencing it even now. I had thought I had gained Subhas Babu for all time as a son. I have fallen from grace. I had the pain of wholly associating myself

with the ban pronounced on him. Time was when Dr. Khare and Vir Nariman used to say that my word was law for them. Alas, I can no longer claim that authority. Anyway I was party to the disciplinary measures taken against them. I maintain that I have acted towards them as I have acted towards those who are considered nearest and dearest to me. In all my dealings love has dictated my actions. Even so have I acted towards Englishmen. Of course they have called me all kinds of names when I have fought them. Their bitter criticism of me had as much effect on me as their praise. I say all this not to claim or expect any certificate of merit. I want to show that because I have said hard things about British rule and methods ill-will against Englishmen must not be imputed to me. Those, therefore, who are filled with ill-will against them will find me a misfit in the end.

I am enunciating no new ideas here. They are to be found in *Indian Home Rule* (*Hind Swaraj*) which was written in 1908 when the technique of satyagraha was still in process of formation. The charkha had become part of this programme of love. As I was picturing life based on non-violence, I saw that it must be reduced to the simplest terms consistent with high thinking. Food and raiment will always remain the prime necessities of life. Life itself becomes impossible if these two are not assured. For non-violent defence, therefore, society has to be so constructed that its members may be able as far as possible to look after themselves in the face of an invasion from without or disturbances within. Just as a domestic kitchen is the easiest thing in such circumstances, the takli or at most the spinning wheel and the loom are the simplest possessions for the manufacture of cloth. Society based on non-violence can only consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary co-operation is the condition of dignified and peaceful existence. A society which anticipates and provides for meeting

violence with violence will either lead a precarious life or create big cities and magazines for defence purposes. It is not unreasonable to presume from the state of Europe that its cities, its monster factories and huge armaments are so intimately interrelated that the one cannot exist without the other. The nearest approach to civilization based upon non-violence is the erstwhile village republic of India. I admit that it was very crude. I know that there was in it no non-violence of my definition and conception. But the germ was there. All I have said may be pure folly. It behoves me as a faithful servant of the nation not to hide my folly. There is no doubt that we are on the eve of a big change. I hope it will be for the better, but it may be also for the worse. I must have the courage to share with my co-workers my innermost thoughts even though I may risk the loss of their co-operation.

To resume the argument. It is from that germ that I have developed the technique of non-violence. If the charkha can bear the ample interpretation I have put upon it, it becomes the most effective weapon in the armoury of satyagraha. The weak thread from the wheel binds the millions in an unbreakable cord. One yard of the thread may be useless, but millions of unending threads spun by willing and knowing hands will make a cord strong enough to bear any strain that may be put upon it. But between 1908 and 1914 the idea remained dormant. The whole scheme was conceived for India. Nevertheless the spirit of it was worked out even in South Africa. The life of the satyagrahis there was reduced to simplest terms. Whether barristers or others, they learnt the dignity of labour. They accepted voluntary poverty as their lot in life and identified themselves with the poor. On my arrival in India I began single-handed to work for revival of the charkha. In 1921 khadi became one of the chief items of the constructive programme

of the Congress. The charkha occupied the centre of the Congress flag with its vital connection with non-violence. I am, therefore, today saying nothing new. But as has often happened people have passed by what I have said, until they have been compelled to take action.

I have great regard for all the comrades who have been writing against the charkha and its implications. They are rendering a service by guiding the country according to their lights. I do not want their mechanical assent to my requirements. I should take it if it served the national purpose, but I know that it cannot.

I must here consider Sir Chimanlal Setalvad's letter to *The Times of India*. I know we have had political differences practically since my return to India in 1915. He is an eminent lawyer. But that no more entitles him to give an authoritative opinion on the economy of the charkha than on the use of infantry in modern warfare. I invite him to study the literature that has grown round it. I promise that he will revise his opinion on its potency. May I also remind him that I claim many mill-owners among my friends? They know my views about mills. They know too that I have had a share in promoting the prosperity of our mills in relation to foreign mills. Sir Chimanlal should also know that I am guiding the policy of the largest and most powerful labour union in all India. My opposition to the mills is unbending and uncompromising. But it is wholly non-violent, and I make bold to say that the mill-owners will be the first to give me that certificate. My connection with the mills is a happy and complete illustration of non-violent resistance. I need not be reminded that they pamper me because they know that my activity cannot touch them. I flatter myself with the belief that they know better. They know that, if with my fixed

views about mills I had violent intentions about them, my activity could cause so much trouble that they would be obliged to treat me as an enemy and to summon the assistance of the law against me.

But I like Sir Chimanlal's challenge to the ex-ministers. Let them speak.

Sevagram, 9-1-40

Harijan, 13-1-1940

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WHY ONLY KHADI?

Prof. Kumarappa has a grouse against me that, although I am the author and guide of the A. I. V. I. A., I seem to treat it as a step-child. I have retorted that the grouse is due to superficial reasoning. He will not take a defeat lying down. He has returned to the charge again and again, and refuses to be satisfied till I proclaim to the world that the other village industries stand on the same footing with khadi. For me the proposition was so self-evident as not to need any enunciation. But Prof. Kumarappa is right so far as practical application is concerned. People are not governed by theory. Thus several people have recently complained to me that they know men who use khadi but use no other village articles. They suggest that many Congressmen wear khadi because it is required by the constitution. But having no belief in it they never think of anything but their convenience so far as other articles of use are concerned. This I call fulfilling the letter and killing the spirit. And where the spirit is killed the letter is of as much use as a body from which life has ebbed away. I have often said that khadi is the central sun round which the other village industries revolve like so many planets. They have no independent existence. Nor will khadi exist without the other industries. They are absolutely interdependent. The fact is that we have to make a choice between India of the villages that are as ancient as herself and India of the cities which are a creation of foreign domination. Today the cities dominate and drain the villages so that they are crumbling to ruin. My khadi mentality tells me that cities must subserve villages when that domina-

tion goes. Exploiting of villages is itself organized violence. If we want Swaraj to be built on non-violence, we shall have to give the villages their proper place. This we will never do unless we revive village industries by using the products thereof in place of things produced in city factories, foreign or indigenous. Perhaps it is now clear why I identify khadi with non-violence. Khadi is the chief village handicraft. Kill khadi and you must kill the villages and with them non-violence. I cannot prove this by statistics. The proof is before our eyes.

Sevagram,. 14-1-40
Harijan, 20-1-1940

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THE CONGRESS AND KHADI

I have letters complaining that the khadi clause of the Congress Constitution is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. The correspondents' chief complaint is that, in selecting Congress candidates for municipalities and local boards, the Congress officials do not enforce the khadi clause. One correspondent says that the obligation to wear khadi is waived because the Congress officials do not find competent enough candidates among khadi-wearers. This would be, if the dearth of proper men can be proved, a sound reason for altering the clause, surely not for committing a deliberate breach of the Congress Constitution. A writer justifies the waiver by arguing that there is no connection between Swaraj and khadi. This again may be a reason for a change in the Constitution but not for disregarding it. Every Congressman is a potential civil resister. The right to civil disobedience accrues only to those who perform the duty of voluntarily obeying the laws of the State, more so the laws of their own making. Therefore Congressmen are taking grave risks when they commit wilful breaches of the Constitution.

And is there no connection between Swaraj and khadi? Were the Congressmen who made themselves responsible for the khadi clause in the Constitution so dense that they did not see the fallacy which is so obvious to some critics? I have not hesitated to say, and I make bold to repeat, that there is no Swaraj for the millions, for the hungry and the naked and for the millions of illiterate women without khadi. Habitual use of khadi is a sign that the wearer identifies himself with the poorest in the land, and has patriotism and self-sacrifice enough in him to wear khadi even though it may not be so soft or elegant in appearance as foreign fineries, nor so cheap.

Sevagram, 22-1-40

Harijan, 27-1-1940

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MUSLIM WEAVERS AND MILL YARN

Q. By insisting on the use of certified khadi only, you have delivered a very severe blow to the Muslim weavers on the one hand who are mostly using mill yarn, and on the other to the consumer who is thus induced to purchase certified khadi which is notoriously dear. I am a Muslim working for the uplift of the weaver class. I appeal to you to remove this double hardship by sanctioning the use of hand-woven mill yarn khadi.

A. There is no communalism in khadi. The A. I. S. A. has thousands of Muslim spinners and hundreds of Muslim weavers on its books. Khadi has as yet made little impression upon mill yarn weavers. What it has done is to provide occupation to those Hindu and Muslim weavers who were thrown out of employment by mill competition. Those weavers who do not take to weaving hand-spun are cutting their own throats, because the natural consequence of the spread of mills will be the destruction of weavers as it has been that of hand-spinners. The hand-loom weavers who have held their own are pattern weavers. If khadi became universal, Muslim and other weavers who are today weaving mill yarn would, as a matter of course, take to weaving hand-spun. Thus there is no case of khadi ever hitting a single weaver. In fact it is his sole protection.

Sevagram, 5-3-40
Harijan, 9-3-1940

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KHADI AND POLITICS

Q. Are you not endangering the khadi movement by identifying it with the political programme, especially the civil disobedience part of it ?

A. Most certainly not. I would be, if khadi was confined only to Congressmen or civil resisters. Khadi is prescribed as national wear for all, whether Congressmen or others. It is used even by some Englishmen, Americans and other Westerners. Your objection, if it was valid, would apply even to communal unity, removal of untouchability and temperance. These four have gained importance and momentum since they were incorporated in the Congress constructive programme. They can all become illegal if they become mixed up with violence. If they did become illegal, it would be found that the movements as such were not suppressed but the organizations masquerading under innocent labels were in reality covering violence.

Sevagram, 1-4-40
Harijan, 6-4-1940

Q. Has takli been introduced into the basic education scheme with the economic, i. e. self-support, or the educative, end in view?

A. Anything introduced in basic education can only have one end in view, i. e. the educative. The object of basic education is the physical, intellectual and moral development of the children through the medium of a handicraft. But I hold that any scheme which is sound from the educative point of view and is efficiently managed, is bound to be sound economically. For instance, we can teach our children to make clay toys that are to be destroyed afterwards. That too will develop their intellect. But it will neglect a very important moral principle, viz. that human labour and material should never be used in a wasteful or unproductive way. The emphasis laid on the principle of spending every minute of one's life usefully is the best education for citizenship and incidentally makes basic education self-sufficient.

Q. How can khadi and spinning lead to Swaraj?

A. If millions co-operate, it cannot but generate tremendous strength which can be put to any use one likes. The charkha provides the best medium for such co-operation. It provides dignified employment and food and clothing for Daridranarayan. This cannot but produce mass consciousness and non-violent strength for gaining Swaraj.

Q. Must one who takes to khadi take to spinning as well?

A. From the economic point of view it is enough to take to khadi. But if khadi is to be our weapon for winning Swaraj, spinning is of equal necessity. Khadi gives us economic self-sufficiency, whereas spinning links us with the lowest paid labour. In militarized countries everyone gives a certain time for military

purposes. Ours being a non-violent basis, everyone should do sacrificial spinning for a minimum period from year to year. Maulana Mahomed Ali used to call the takli and the yarn our arms and ammunition for winning Swaraj. The analogy is telling. Is it too much for us to give half an hour or one hour per day to spinning as a measure of voluntary conscription? I remember, at the beginning of the last war when I was in England I was given pyjama suits to stitch for the soldiers. Many others from the most aristocratic families including some venerable old ladies and gentlemen were doing such work. We all finished our quota of work as we were required to. No one considered it beneath his or her dignity to do so. Towards the end of the war far more work was given by the whole nation. Yet no one complained. I warn you that, although today I am asking you only to give half an hour or one hour per day to spinning, I may have to be more exacting as the situation develops.

Q. Should civil resister prisoners offer satyagraha in order to get the permission to wear khadi and spin regularly in jail?

A. A satyagrahi willingly submits to all jail discipline. He never wishes to embarrass the authorities. To insist on being allowed to spin in jail when you do not do so with religious regularity outside, would be a species of violence. I would not recommend that course to anybody although I can conceive of exceptional cases — Appa Patwardhan for instance — who might go to the extreme length in order to secure that permission. We have not behaved as ideal prisoners in the past. There has been violence and untruth in our actions. I do not want that to be repeated. We may plead with the jail authorities. I would be faced with a dilemma if I were not allowed these facilities. What I have said of spinning applies equally to khadi.

Sevagram, 2-4-40

Harijan, 6-4-1940

CHARKHA — SWARAJ — AHIMSA

A correspondent says now that civil disobedience is in the air I must once more, even at the risk of repeating myself, summarize in a single article my argument showing that there is a vital connection between the charkha, Swaraj, and ahimsa. I gladly make the attempt.

The spinning wheel represents to me the hope of the masses. The masses lost their freedom, such as it was, with the loss of the charkha. The charkha supplemented the agriculture of the villagers and gave it dignity. It was the friend and solace of the widow. It kept the villagers from idleness. For the charkha included all the anterior and posterior industries — ginning, carding, warping, sizing, dyeing and weaving. These in their turn kept the village carpenter and the blacksmith busy. The charkha enabled the seven hundred thousand villages to become self-contained. With the exit of the charkha went the other village industries, such as the oil press. Nothing took the place of these industries. Therefore the villages were drained of their varied occupations and their creative talent and what little wealth these brought them.

The analogy of the other countries in which too village handicrafts were destroyed will not serve us because, whereas the villagers there had some compensating advantages, India's villagers had practically none. The industrialized countries of the West were exploiting other nations. India is herself an exploited country. Hence, if the villagers are to come into their own, the most natural thing that suggests itself is the revival of the charkha and all it means.

This revival cannot take place without an army of selfless Indians of intelligence and patriotism working with a single mind in the villages to spread the message of the charkha and bring a ray of hope and light into their lustreless eyes. This is a mighty effort at co-operation and adult education of the correct type. It brings about a silent and sure revolution like the silent but sure and life-giving revolution of the charkha.

Twenty years' experience of charkha work has convinced me of the correctness of the argument here advanced by me. The charkha has served the poor Muslims and Hindus in almost an equal measure. Nearly five crores of rupees have been put into the pockets of these lakhs of village artisans without fuss and tomtoming.

Hence I say without hesitation that the charkha must lead us to Swaraj in terms of the masses belonging to all faiths. The charkha restores the villages to their rightful place and abolishes distinctions between high and low.

But the charkha cannot bring Swaraj, in fact it will not move, unless the nation has faith in non-violence. It is not exciting enough. Patriots yearning for freedom are apt to look down upon the charkha. They will look in vain to find it in history books. Lovers of liberty are fired with the zeal to fight and banish the foregin ruler. They impute all the vices to him and see none in themselves. They cite instances of countries having gained their freedom through seas of blood. The charkha devoid of violence seems an utterly tame affair.

In 1919 the lovers of the liberty of India were introduced to non-violence as the only and sure means to Swaraj and to the charkha as a symbol of non-violence. The charkha found its proud place on the national flag in 1921. But non-violence had not gone deep into the heart of India, and so the charkha

never came into its own. It will never come into its own unless the vast body of Congressmen develop a living faith in non-violence. When they do so they will, without needing any argument, discover for themselves that there is no other symbol of non-violence than the charkha, and that without its universalization there will be no visible expression of non-violence. It is common ground that without non-violence there can be no non-violent disobedience. My argument may be false, my data may be faulty. But holding the views I do, let me proclaim that without fulfilment of the conditions prescribed by me I simply cannot declare civil disobedience.

Sevagram, 9-4-40
Harijan, 13-4-1940

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LIVING WAGE

Q. You once wrote in *Harijan* to the effect that villagers are at liberty to buy yarn spun in their own villages without reference to the living wage, and that the A. I. S. A. should let them go their way in this matter. Are those who wear khadi woven from such yarn eligible as Congress delegates? And what is the village worker to do in this regard? He naturally does propaganda in favour of a living wage. There are always a certain number of villagers who buy A. I. S. A. khadi, but at the same time there are many who cannot afford to do so. And even if they pay less than the living wage, there is no doubt that the spinners get more relief and khadi finds a certain place in village life too. Is the village worker there to encourage such khadi?

A. If we were always careful enough not to read into a writer's sentences a meaning which defeats his very purpose, such questions would rarely arise. Where no wages are paid and the yarn is self-spun, no ban of any kind can be applied. It is of course assumed that the A. I. S. A. rule is not broken on a false plea of self-sufficiency. The same applies to the village worker.

But there is one important issue raised in your questions. The A. I. S. A. worker in a particular village cannot pay a living wage if he is to use the village khadi. Therefore he will buy yarn at a lesser rate and give some work to the spinners who would otherwise get nothing. But he may not become a member of the Congress. He will serve the Congress from without. Sometimes such persons serve the Congress far better, and they are moreover saved from

the ambitions that membership often carries with it. It is clear that such khadi cannot be sold outside the village. It should all be absorbed locally. The moment uncertified khadi is put into the market the A. I. S. A. law is broken and real khadi receives a setback. The A. I. S. A. is labouring under great stress in trying to raise the spinners' wages. Never in the world have I heard of wages being increased from one or two pice to 8 or 12 pice per day without the wage-earners having asked for a rise in pay. The A. I. S. A. has done monumental work in this matter.

Sevagram, 27-8-40
Harijan, 1-9-1940

AN AMERICAN'S QUESTIONS

An American journalist had important questions to ask arising from the latest decision of the A. I. C. C. in Bombay — questions not merely political, but dealing with international relations and commercial and social intercourse.

"What is India's contribution towards making the world safe from Hitlerism?" was his first question. The reply was, perhaps as he had expected, short and sweet: "If the Congress succeeds in its non-violent effort, Hitlerism and all such isms will go as a matter of course."

"Don't you think," he next asked, "India should do something to make facts better known in America and thus promote the interchange of goods and ideas? What do you think should be done in this connection?"

"First let us take up goods. America has had her bit, irrespective of Indian conditions and India's wishes. So far as ideas are concerned, my unhappy experience is that anti-Indian propaganda carried on in America has held undisputed sway, so much so that even the visit of an outstanding personality like Tagore produced little impression on the American mind."

"But why does not India endeavour to make herself better known in America?"

"If America really wanted to know what Indian opinion is at a given time, there is ample literature which is growing from day to day to which they have access. If you have in mind an Indian agency which should do propagandist work on behalf of India, again our bitter experience has been that imperialist propaganda that is carried on with much ability and perseverance and at a lavish expenditure is such that

we can never overtake it, and the work of any such agency has up till now proved fruitless."

His next question was rather strange: "Why not have Indian people use Indian hand-spun cloth and keep her mills busy for the export of manufactured cloth and yarn? Don't you think that this would help the cotton-grower?" He evidently was thinking of a free India.

"I would not mind such a thing," said Gandhiji, "but it must be in order to supply the felt needs of the country which received our cloth. I have no idea of exploiting other countries for the benefit of India. We are suffering from the poisonous disease of exploitation ourselves, and I would not like my country to be guilty of any such thing. If Japan, say, as a free country wanted India's help, and said we could produce certain goods cheaper, and we might export them to Japan, we would gladly do so. But under my scheme of things all dumping of goods by one country in another, supported by her army and her navy, has to cease."

"Apart from export of merchandise what has India to give America, and in turn what does India expect from America?"

"I must correct your question for you. India sends no merchandise to America, she sends only raw material, and that is a matter for serious consideration for every nationalist. For we cannot suffer our country remaining an exporter of raw produce, for it means (as it has meant) extinction of handicrafts and art itself. I would expect America to treat India not as though India was a country for American exploitation but as if India was a free country, although unarmed, and deserving, therefore, the same treatment that America would wish at the hands of India."

"You are repeating, Sir, the message of Jesus," said the correspondent.

"I agree," said Gandhiji. "We are poor in technical skill, but as soon as you accept and consent to follow Jesus' teaching I would not have to complain of all the skill being monopolized by America. You will then say, 'Here is a sister country poor in technical skill, let us offer our skilled assistance not for exploitation, not for a terrific price, but for its benefit, and so for nothing.' And here let me say a word about your missionaries. You send them here for nothing, but that also is part of imperialist exploitation. For they would like to make us like you, better buyers of your goods, and unable to do without your cars and luxuries. So the Christianity that you send us is adulterated. If you established your schools, colleges and hospitals without the object of adding to the number of the so-called Christian population, your philanthropy would be untainted.

"As regards technical skill, I cannot afford to do what the Tatas are doing. They can afford to bring an American expert manager at Rs. 20,000 a month. But whilst they represent the spirit of adventure, they do not represent poor India. India has seven lakhs of villages which take in 90 per cent of her population. America has to think of these. America ought, if she will be of real help, to exercise her resourcefulness in this direction. And for that purpose America will have to cease to be the premier exporting country that she is. My views on national planning differ from the prevailing ones. I do not want it along industrial lines. I want to prevent our villages from catching the infection of industrialization. American exploitation has added neither to the moral height of the exploited countries nor of the exploiting country. On the contrary it has impeded their march towards spiritual progress, and deadened America's real spirit of philanthropy. A phenomenon like the one that America witnessed cannot happen in India. I mean the destruction of tons of sugar and

other agricultural products. You might have supplied other countries the sugar and the wheat or fed America's own unemployed."

"But," said the correspondent, laughing, "you could not have taken our pigs!"

"I know. But all do not think like me. Pandit Nehru wants industrialization because he thinks that, if it is socialized, it would be free from the evils of capitalism. My own view is that the evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialization can eradicate them."

M. D.

Harijan, 29-9-1940

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